

The vain crowds wandering  
blindly, led by lies.

—*Lucretius.*

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The time is out of joint. Oh cursed  
spite

That ever I was born to put it right.

—*Shakespeare*

GREETINGS to readers, friends and fellow-freethinkers all over the world. The admirable way in which freethinkers in other parts of the world are helping to keep aloft the flag of freethought in these difficult times, when few are prone to give heed to the voice of Reason, encourages and inspires us to greater efforts for the "best of causes".

Freedom and progress are never achieved by just a waving of flags and shouting of slogans. They depend on those silent workers who by spreading the light of knowledge, truth and a scientific outlook, strike at the very roots of ignorance, irrationalism, and intolerance which give rise to violence and brutality.

The task before freethinkers in India is a colossal one. With the increasing curtailment of freedom of thought and expression, increases the responsibility and importance of all those who claim to be fighters in the front ranks of freedom.

As if unconscious of the mighty upheavals going on in other parts of the world, self centered individuals in India advance ridiculous schemes which accentuate sectarianism

and religious differences. Self-appointed spokesmen of the Indian people hark back to the golden age of Indian civilisation. At the very time when India must unite as one nation and lift up her face to the future, she is asked to look back and drug herself with the past. But such appeals to the cultural backwardness of the people are loosing their sway on the rising generation of modern Indian youth. That is the one ray of hope for the renaissance of the Indian people.

The youth of a nation are the trustees of posterity. Youth must sweep aside the tortuous barriers between man and man; these intellectual chains which mar the happiness and hamper the progress of the Indian people. They must build up a new outlook on life based on justice and equality. A philosophy of life which recognises the right of every individual to freedom of thought and expression and the fullest development of the best in him.

The mind of the vast bulk of the Indian people is dominated by ignorance, superstition and obscurantism. Indian society is burdened with outmoded and harmful social customs and dogmas and the duty of every progressive man and woman is to remove these obstacles to intellectual and social progress. India cannot progress unless it gives up its irrational medieval religious mode of thought. India must give up that philosophy of life which enthrones ignorance at the expense of knowledge, worships blind faith at the expense of reason, glorifies intellectual slavery and tramples upon intellectual liberty.

When we reflect on the past it is not difficult to distinguish the major forces which played a part in bringing about the present state of the world. Religion is one of them. It is the credulous and uncritical mental attitude which made the vast majority of mankind fall a prey to the corrupt, mendacious, and hypocritical influences of a few unscrupulous and powerdrunk, individuals.

"Religion takes its origin in fear, proceeds by intuition and the 'inner light', engenders an atmosphere of blind credulity and intellectual panic, produces as its practical contribution to life the subordination of reason, science and humaneness to unreason, theologic ritual and a moral absolutism that is the essence of sadism. Religion is on the side of the vested interests, opposes, novelty and reform, foments counter-revolution (economic and cultural), uses the cunning of the mind to make ignorance more attractive than knowledge, supports always and everywhere the reactionary point of view." (Schmalhanssen).

Religion has been a colossal failure. It is high time the Indian people woke up from the stupor of blind faith and fatalism and adopted a braver and more courageous outlook on life.

We must remember that on the way in which we face the problems of the present times, on the courage and foresight with which we do so, will depend the state in which we shall find ourselves in the future.

Let us, therefore, not waste time, idly waiting for some unknowable, mystical strangely merciful power, to rescue us from the morass which is the creation of our own ignorance. But armed with the power of knowledge and the wisdom born of painful experience mould with our own bare hands our future destiny in keeping with the highest aspirations of our greatest thinkers. Let us prove once more, the oft proven historical truth, that man is the master of his own destiny.

## BETWEEN OURSELVES.

THE sudden change in the editorship of *Reason* will come as a surprise to our readers and members. But the events which led to this change were beyond our control, and I have assumed the editorship more by virtue of necessity than that of merit.

Be that as it may; Readers will be pleased to know that although Prof. R. D. Karve is unable to continue as editor, he will contribute his most interesting and instructive articles to *Reason* regularly. Prof. Karve guided the destinies of this journal through some of its most difficult periods and for that the Rationalist Association of India will always remain grateful to him.

ABRAHAM SOLOMON.

# Blind Faith

By R. D. KARVE

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THE October issue of the Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society contains a very curious review of two books by Sadhu Santinātha, which have already been reviewed in *Reason*: (1) The Critical Examination of the Philosophy of Religion, and (2) Sadhana or Spiritual Discipline. The review is written by Prof. V. A. Gadgil, who admits that "the author's contribution and achievement are worthy of a humble and sincere truth-seeker who has devoted more than thirty years of his life to an earnest and continuous search for the ultimate Truth", and further that "the author's exposition of different systems and theories is, on the whole, correct. One may also endorse his view that reverence for the Scriptures, faith in God or some supernatural being, adherence to the Law of '*Karma*', belief in the self as distinct from the body and its capacity for spiritual self-discipline (Sadhana) and finally attainment of liberation are generally recognized as essential features of religion." Then he remarks that "it is really gratifying to note his admission that each of these features can even be supported by strong rational arguments. The author however, strangely doubts their validity because none of them is based on unassailable grounds." The reviewer implies that it is all right to make use of rational arguments so long as they support religion, but finds it preposterous that the author should look for unassailable grounds before he believes in it. In fact, says Prof. Gadgil, "his so-called logical method of approach to the subject of his critical examination is not, indeed, the only criterion by which such problems as he has discussed may be solved. Nay, that method, as a matter of fact, is not at all calcu-

lated to lead to the solution of the riddle of the Universe. We would like to remind the learned Sadhu of what the great *Upanishadic* seer has said in this connection, 'Naishamatis-tarkenapaniya'. Mere intelligence cannot ascertain the nature of Reality. It is in the state of *Samadhi* alone that the ultimate Truth is realized, especially in a *Samadhi* known as *Nirvikalpa*, where the self becomes one with the Reality." Now this is what the Sadhu claims to have attained. Is his word to be doubted simply because he reaches a different conclusion from Prof. Gadgil? The gist of all that the reviewer says comes to this, that a critical examination should not be too critical, or perhaps that it is utterly wrong to make a critical examination of religion, because otherwise it is impossible to see how a critical examination can stop short of a logical conclusion, how it can examine logically so long as arguments in support of religion can go and then suddenly remember the dictum of the Upanishadic seer and stop there. That is certainly not what a critical mind can do and Prof. Gadgil should really have condemned the method altogether instead of being gratified that some rational grounds can be found for religious beliefs. Instead of which, the reviewer goes on to remark that "it is sheer irony of fate that a spiritual seeker and staunch believer who attained to the state of *Samadhi*, as the learned Sadhu would have us believe, (note the insulting doubt, R. D. K.) should not be able to reach the ultimate Reality, but should find, to our utter dismay, the faculty of reasoning as his saviour and thus end his spiritual journey as an inveterate agnostic after a very strenuous and long period of self-discipline. With his mind thus divorced from

the Reality and consequently feeling shaky about the existence of higher spiritual powers, the author endeavours to interpret and measure religious concepts and their influence on human life in the terms of an agnostic, with the result that one can read his sense of utter failure and disappointment writ large on every page of the work which would otherwise have been a monumental achievement to the eternal glory of the learned Sadhu." So the author of these works is to be considered a failure because he reaches a different conclusion from the one which Prof. Gadgil would have him reach, in spite of the fact that his work is based on more than thirty years spent in an "earnest and continuous search for the ultimate Truth." Here, on the one hand, we have an author who spends thirty years in trying to get at the so-called Truth with a capital T, and finds ultimately that it exists only in the imagination, and, on the other hand, an arm-chair critic—for I can hardly believe that a professor's life is compatible with the kind of effort that the Sadhu has made—smugly pitying the Sadhu for failing to attain the Reality as visualized by Prof. Gadgil, and expressing dismay at the fact that the Sadhu falls back on his reasoning faculty when he found that all the so-called religious means of attaining the Truth, such as Samadhi, have proved failures! And in his own learned way, Prof. Gadgil goes on to explain why the Sadhu failed to find the Reality. "The only explanation of this strange and unfortunate condition that can be offered is that the author had not the good luck of meeting a worthy *Guru* for a disciple of his type." He ends with a prayer to God to bless the Sadhu with the guidance of a worthy *Guru*. Unfortunately I cannot pray to a nonexistent God to develop Prof. Gadgil's reasoning faculty a little further and teach him that it is hardly honest to make use of reason so long as it serves your purpose and then pretend that logic is no good, even on the strength of a dictum from the *Upanishads*.

If the intellect is not to be used, the only other alternative is blind faith, which is really what Prof. Gadgil advocates. It is difficult to see what he means by saying that the logical method of approach is not the only criterion by which such problems can be solved. Does he mean that it is one of the criteria? In the first place, a criterion is not a method of solving any problem at all. A criterion is a test, a means of judging the truth of something, and I maintain that logic is the only criterion of truth. Nothing can be true if it is incompatible with logic. Even if we assume that truth can be guessed at by other means, the only means of testing it will have to be logic, and if it does not stand the test, it has to be dismissed as an untruth.

Prof. Gadgil thinks that a *Guru* could have helped the Sadhu to arrive at the conclusion desired by Prof. Gadgil, otherwise, of course, he would be a bad *Guru*. But what can a *Guru* do? Will a logical mind submit to a *Guru's* dictum? A logical mind cannot help reasoning even if blind faith is enjoined. So it is utterly futile to hope that even with a *Guru*, the Sadhu would have arrived at the "Siddhanta" view-point, "according to which the existence of God or the ultimate Reality is established beyond doubt by the revelations of our great *Seers*." How a so-called revelation can establish beyond doubt the existence of anything at all passes my comprehension. Of course there will be blind followers who will believe in the 'revelation', but there will equally of course be doubters whom nothing but a logical proof will convince. The blind faith of believers can never prove anything. If it did, all religions would be equally proved—which is impossible since they are contradictory. Contradictory statements cannot be simultaneously true, though they may be simultaneously false, and anybody who considers the absurdity of the statements made by different religions can only come to the conclu-

(Continued on page 32)



# WHO IS THIS MARXIST?

By Dr. G. Y. CHITNIS.

**I**N the last issue of "Reason", there is a very curious article written by a Marxist on "What is Time?" Therein he claims to have presented the marxian point of view.

I do not call myself a marxist, because I do not swear by everything that Marx, Engels or Lenin wrote; but that does not mean that I consider myself more "Marxist than Marx" or more "Leninist than Lenin".

I do not also believe in Dialectical Materialism, because I find that the processes of nature cannot be subjected to one immutable law, human or divine. I may not have discussed Dialectics with this unknown Marxist, but there are a number of well-known Marxists in the country with whom I have had the pleasure of discussing it almost threadbare and not one of them complained that I "spit every time its name is mentioned." Even now I am prepared to discuss it with any Marxist except this self-styled one not because I have any grudge against him, but simply because he himself does not understand Dialectics. He seems to be under the impression that if one believes in a thing, it is not necessary for one to understand it. This Marxist pretends to be a staunch believer in Dialectical Materialism and therefore he has gracefully dispensed with the necessity of understanding it.

The Marxian view of Time that this literary *dilettante* has given is so blatantly false, hopelessly crude and so terribly confused and un-

intelligible that I have begun to feel a little sorry for Marx. I have been at times a very severe critic of Dialectical Materialism, but I think a time is coming when I shall have to take up my pen to defend Marx and his philosophy from the wellmeaning but foolish iconoclastic literary activities of these pseudo-Marxists. For I daresay that an unintelligible, vague and incorrect article of this type will destroy Marxism much more effectively than all the non-Marxian criticisms put together.

I am not, therefore called upon to refute the Marxian view of Time because no Marxian view of Time is given and I refuse to enter into discussion of this theme with people who do not possess the intelligence to understand even the rudiments of Marxism. A very funny charge this so-called Marxist makes against me viz. Dialectical Materialism reduces thinking to brain work and that is why it upsets me. I call this charge funny, because in the first place the brain work that is exhibited in this article is a veritable brain storm which may quite possibly have ended in brain fever, and secondly it is precisely because of the opposite reason that I reject Dialectical Materialism. This philosophy has today become a dogma and as such dispenses with brain work altogether. The juvenile Marxists who are profoundly overawed by the enormous intellectual output of Marx and Lenin and who cannot conceive of human intelligence being so vast naturally come to the conclusion that they represent the last stage of intellectual development and any body who has the impudence to criticise or disagree with these intellectual giants must be a bit of a humbug or a rascal or both. This is precisely what the hirelings of the established church said in the middle ages about those who had the temerity to question the infallibility of the Bible and Aristotle. Even in those days the orthodox defenders of the Bible and Aristotle did not understand either the Bible or Aristotle. The so-called heretics and the apostates were more diligent students of both than the priests and their acolytes.

Coming to the article proper, the very first sentence in it is rather rattling. "The geometry of the universe is the geometry of a continuum." What does it mean precisely? There is another sentence equally learned and equally meaningless "Relativity physics does not make all qualities relative—it sets them in

new absolute framework." Then again "The absolute framework in which these new qualities are set is the continuum of space-time specified by four dimensions." If the continuum of space, to use the grandiloquent phrase of this Marxist, provides an *absolute* framework where is the sense in saying that the universe has no absolute space and absolute time? Thus every paragraph of this article contradicts every other paragraph. But after some time he comes down from his Olympian heights and descends to vulgar common places which even an infant in arms takes for granted. "How in fact" this Marxist asks "has mankind reached its conception of space and time? Obviously *in practice*. That we can repeatedly move ourselves from the *hither* side of a given object to the beyond side - that in the course of so doing we pass other objects and *leave* them behind.....similarly all things we do and all things which are done to us happen after or before each other or simultaneously with each other.....day alternates with night and while either endures, things happen in the light or in the dark.". So you see this is how mankind acquires its ideas of space and time. I do not think any body will object to this statement even if it is very crudely put. If I say that the sun rises in the east and sets in the west, no body I am sure, is going to object to that statement.

But after this he again enters into a jugglery of words and achieves something like a grand success in becoming entirely unintelligible. Here is an example. "There is only one direction to time, viz. that which the number registered increases. To suggest that the direction of time, or, as Eddington prefers to call it, the arrow of time, may be uncertain, or is reversible, is to imply that time is something completely independent of the unfolding process in nature from which the notion has been abstracted. The direction of time is involved in the sequence of events that constitute our Universe, and unidirection time is drawn with time by us from that process."

I would also like to give an example of the un-Marxian manner in which this Marxist treats his subject.

"That space and time are opposites is self evident.....that they are united is equally obvious since nothing can happen in one which does not also happen in the other. That they are thus a unity of opposites need worry no one who has not pledged himself *a priori* to a desecration of the grave of Hegel."

Since I have no desire to desecrate the grave of Hegel, the unity of opposites does not worry me in the least. What worries me is that this Marxist who talks so glibly of the unity of opposites does not himself understand what that means and therefore it is he who is desecrating the twin graves of Hegel and Marx. Taking for granted that time and space are opposites they cannot be united as simple opposites but can only be reconciled in a higher synthesis. The Marxist has somehow managed to miss this most important aspect of the Hegelian and Marxian Dialectics and therefore his short sketchy, jumpy but learned-looking dissertation on the Marxian view of Time reads like an expurgated edition of Shakespeare's Hamlet from which the character of Hamlet is entirely eliminated.

I can easily forgive him for being rude to me; his attack upon me is absolutely unprovoked and uncalled for; but I do not mind, because I can well understand it. After having selected a subject he could not cope with he adopted the brilliant method of ending his article with choice words of abuse intended for my humble self. He had no other way of getting out of the difficulty. But what I cannot possibly forgive is that under the pretext of presenting a Marxian view of Time he has insulted and abused Marx and Hegel in a way that not even the worst enemy of these great philosophers would dream of.

By the way, who is this Marxist? And who on earth is Josserini?

# Karma-Yoga Through Nama-Sadhana

By M. V. V. K. Rangachari,

“SRI Vallabhethi, varadeti, dayapareti, Bhaktapriyeti, bhavalunthana kovideti, Natheti nagasayaneti jagannivasety alapanam pratipadam kurume Mukunda” Thus commenced Kulasekhar, the kingly saint of the south, the well-known rapture-song: Mukundamala. At every step, at each word, Oh, Mukunda, let me utter your name: “Lord of the Goddess (Sri) of affluence”, “he who bestows boons”, “kindness laden”, “lover of devotees”, “expert in dispelling the sin of Samsara”, “lord, master” “he who rests on the serpent”, and “he whose residence is the entire universe” and several others.

What is in the name? If we are to formulate the significance of a word, we have to reach up to the association that it raises in the mind. When we hear the word ‘fruit’ or ‘mango’ uttered by some one, we are reminded of the attributes or qualities that pertain to it, since the associated sensations of the taste like sweetness, smell and flavour, and softness to touch &c. are mentally reproduced, or revived in imagination. Now these attributes are qualities that inhere in the picture of the name, as Krishna is at once understood to be black. The qualities themselves are modes of behaviour of the substance conceived through the name. They constitute the activities, Kriyas, which the object involves itself in. When we say that the mango is sweet, we mean that the fruit produced and continues to produce the sensation of sweetness when enjoyed. All forms of qualitative differentiation are thus merely the statements of peculiar actions or forms of activity of substances.

Our habit of differentiating parts of speech

is merely an abstraction. The noun is indeed nothing different from its various adjectives that enter into its definition. These adjectives in their turn are nothing apart from the verbs, or activities, modes of behaviour, of the thing denoted by the noun. Thus we reach the unity of our thought-content, when we realise that the name that we utter is not merely a conventional symbol, but has behind it an association of the Kriyas (verbs) or activities which in their discriminative import constitute its adjectival or attributive factors. As nothing may be known except through its attributes or qualities, and as these qualities are themselves statements of the mode of behaviour under different conditions, the identity of the Name (noun) with its Viseshana (adjective) implying the Kriya-Sakti (verb) logically deduced.

But in our endeavour to investigate the activities of any object, we may not overlook the limitations inherent in the pursuit. At no time in life will it become possible to learn all the predicates, and through them to deduce all the qualities of the objects of study. Names and forms are themselves limitations while they serve to present before us some clear images of the actions and attributes, which alone concrete life is able to grasp. The attributeless, actionless Infinity and Eternity is beyond human apprehension. We may use Names in regard thereto, but we express our very inability to express anything thereby. As an object of conscious application, the mysterious fusion of the Unmanifest into the Manifest is somehow left in the back-ground, without the scrutiny of consistent logical examination. There, all our names fail, our adjectives are

powerless, and void of distinctive significance, and our verbs are notionless, out of action. There is Nama beyond all names, Viseshana above all adjectives, and Kriya that out-does all other forms of activity. Into that do all names, verbs and adjectives merge, and out of that do these emerge, as a process of the evolution of consciousness.

The human content of these names is manifest. The qualities that they signify tend to human welfare. The deeds that they stand for bear close reference to the beneficence of social effort and the annihilation of all contrary forces of social evil. They are Kalyana-Gunas through which the highest and best in man stands revealed. That in itself is the concretisation of an abstract Impersonal Ideal, even the conferment of a Super Personality upon the highest concept ever attempted by the human mind. The sublimity of human achievement merits the one-thousand appellations ever uttered in our invocation. The highest possessions, mental, moral as well as physical, pertain to the race, justifying, the proud title of the lord of fortune (Shri Vallabha). Humanity is the one great boon (Varada), and kindness is human nature *in esse* (Dayapara). The response that man gives to the finer devotional attitude in life is immediate (Bhakta-priya). Man, again, it is, that has any potentiality to annihilate sin, for, taking him out of account, virtue would lose all meaning. (Bhava lunthana kovida). Man is the mastermind in the universe of experience which is slowly coming under comprehension (Natha). Resting on the coils of infinite time, man's head is under the shade of that wise hood, significantly proclaiming that in man is to be found the latest edition of life's evolution. (Naga sayana). The one conscious dweller in the universe is man, the dweller that is of any consequence among those that breathe, that has endowed life with a moral value, in that he shoulders responsibility in action and effort (Purusha prayatna). He whose abode is the universe (Jagannivasa) is human-born. We contemplate ever on the essence

of man in all his relations. Life spent in the exercise is the fullest ever lived, if each step that is laid is laid with the full knowledge of human potentialities." The idea back of Nama-Sadhana is thus identical with the raising of appropriate associations in the mind in regard to helpful and beneficent human activities. It is a process of reviving mental pictures of the highest attributes, and concentrating on them (Bhagavad Guna Anubhava). Whenever anything that man does, amounts to conduct, in all the conscious human activity that has any bearing on life, the recollection of the appropriate attribute or Kriya (verb) is facilitated through the Sahasra-Nama-Anusandhana, which touches life at all points. In any situation, it only requires to call out the appropriate Nama, to resolve the problem, in the larger human sense. When evil thoughts cross the mind, think on Bhava Lunthana Kovida, and they fade. When some-one approaches you with a request, deport thyself into VARADA. Confronted with cruelty, Dayapara would yield solace. To the oppressed and down-trodden, there is the Natha, he who is the just ruler. The descent of the Infinite into thought is through denomination in positive language. Speech is the immediate response of our innermost urge to express what would otherwise remain inexpressible. Japa (Nama Sadhana) is the concentration through practice (Abhyasa) in the waking life to strengthen the hold of the Ideal on our otherwise uncharted movements. To repeat the name is to get permeated with the thought-content of its attributes linked to its doings, and where the name stands for higher integration of society, it should not fail to accomplish or aid the march of evolution.

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## **Book Review.**

Roy's new publication,

By ANIL.

# **Science and Superstition**

**C**OMRADE Roy has brought out another interesting book entitled "Science and Superstition". It contains four essays in all—what Comrade Roy calls random notes—the first of which deals with the superstition of the transmigration of soul, the second with hysteria which is generally misunderstood for spiritual trance and the remaining two with crime and punishment. Roy is perhaps justified in calling them random notes because the four essays do not constitute a connected whole and the general manner of dealing with the subject is almost popular.

### **Survival of memory**

In the first he considers the possibility of survival of memory connected with one's previous existence and demonstrates by a psycho-physiological analysis that memories apart from brain cannot exist and since the brain has a purely material origin its survival in a spiritual form is unthinkable; therefore he comes to the conclusion that the transmigration of soul is a physiological impossibility. His robust materialism makes an absolutely short work of all the evidence that has been adduced in favour of this theory and the arguments he has advanced make a very delightful reading.

### **Psychology of the seer**

The second essay deals with the psychology of the seer. He investigates the causes that contribute to the inducing of a religious trance and affirms that religious trance is nothing but a form of hysteria which is to be treated in a psychopathological clinic and it has not the slightest ethical value.

### **Criminology**

The remaining two essays are very important making as they do a very strong plea for treating criminology as a branch of social

science. In a very clear and concise manner he shows that most of the crimes which are committed in this country are the result of the peculiar social and religious traditions that have been handed down to us from generation to generation. The crimes which are committed in the city of Chicago are the natural consequence of the economic and social conditions which obtain in the United States of America. Similarly in India the doctrine of Karma and the cruel custom which condemns virgin widows to perpetual celibacy are, among other things, responsible for a large number of crimes in India.

### **The root of evil**

Even then it is easy to see that the root of crimes as of all evils is primarily economic. Our social customs and peculiar religious traditions are bound up with the patriarchal-feudal system which is still prevalent in the Indian villages. The ancient mode of tilling the soil which demands maximum of labour which is proportionately unproductive and the uneconomic manner in which the entire agricultural system is organised are the main causes that lead to crimes and other allied evils.

### **Aim and Purpose**

Every religious tradition in so far as it is essentially religious leads to the exploitation of the many for the benefit of the few, that is its sole aim and purpose. Therefore the question arises whether the uprooting of all religious and social traditions which have outlived their usefulness is the *sine-qua-non* of the political awakening among the people or a consciousness of their growing political worth is first of all necessary to uproot all the outworn religious and social traditions? It is really difficult to answer this question. According to

certain schools of Marxists the rise of Protestantism in Europe was due to the necessity of emphasising precisely those ethical virtues which led to the development and prosperity of capitalist society; according to some others the Industrial Revolution and the consequent rise of capitalism rendered the movement of the Reformation inevitable

### The Industrial Revolution

What is, of course, of vital importance to remember in this connection is that the Industrial Revolution which created conditions for the rise of capitalism in Europe has also impinged upon the Indian society, shaking it to its very foundation. The Indian nationalist movement which is the result of this impact is driven by an historical necessity to uphold some sort of programme of agrarian revolution. Now my contention is that this programme which the nationalist movement will be unable to carry out in its entirety will at the same time create conditions for a wider social outlook and broader religious sympathies. I do not know for certain if it will destroy the Indian religious mode of thought altogether and replace it with a purely materialist philosophy of life; but what is certain is that this religious mode of thought may become so much liberalised that it will hardly be distinguishable from a scientific mode of thought. It does not mean that the large masses of people will know anything about science but they will at least give up their belief in the doctrine of Karma and the transmigration of soul and will abandon many other stupid religious beliefs which keep them under perpetual economic and political bondage.

### What's the Use ?

What then, it may well be asked, is the use of books like the one under review? I admit that for the masses it is of no use whatsoever. But for the intelligentsia it is of tremendous importance. The movement of an intellectual rebirth is not the movement of the masses; the masses are merely the pawns in this intel-

lectual as well as political game. They will enthusiastically follow and make a god of anybody who takes the slightest trouble to despise them. In other words the general mass of people assimilate the ideas of the class they worship but fundamentally their attitude is frankly materialistic. The theory of the transmigration of soul and the doctrine of Karma are not invented by the masses; they are invented by the dominant class for its own ulterior purpose.

### Transfer of power

When therefore, the ruling class which is wedded to an outmoded ideology is driven out of its position of privilege and its place is taken by another class, then the latter adopts a new ideology to secure its own position of privilege. In this transfer of power from one class to another the condition of the masses becomes slightly improved and therefore they become the enthusiastic supporters of the new regime and the new ideology.

### No Difference

In this sense I make no distinction between the doctrine of the transmigration of soul and the doctrine of Dialectical Materialism. The Russian peasant whose appalling ignorance did not permit him to know the difference between the creeds of Athanasius and Arius nor to unravel the mystery of the triune nature of God could not have within the last twenty years advanced intellectually so much as to unravel the mystery of the triune nature of the Marxian Dialectics.

Therefore I contend that all intellectual movements proceed from the upper classes and they are accepted by the masses on trust without understanding anything about them. The book under review is a welcome contribution to the birth of a new intellectual movement which in course of time will be made acceptable to the general mass of Indian people when the heralds of the new movement will capture political power and become the new dominant class.

# Items of Interests

By A. HUSEIN.

IN spite of the onslaught on reason going on around us we are carrying *Reason* into 1941, with hope that the darkness that has enveloped the earth and the insanity that has gripped civilisation in its mad orgy of butchery of man by man will end and that an age of reason will soon return and prevail.

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I must say that it is only with the wholehearted cooperation and support of our young and old members that we are able to continue our activities in these difficult times and present this issue of *Reason* amply improved in its appearance, quality and contents.

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THE excellent drawing on the cover page bears evidence to the artistic capabilities of our young editor Mr. Solomon. I am sure we could not have had a better composition of ideas than that. At the risk of inviting the editorial blue pencil, I must say that Art is Mr. Solomon's neglected love (though not very neglected as we can see), rationalism having taken first place.

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IT is trial that brings forth the best in man, and the present time is the crucial test for us rationalists. This topsy-turvy world must be put right once again. With the zeal and enthusiasm evinced by many young and old members of our Association to serve the "best of course", I am confident we shall carry on our fight into the very heart of superstition, ignorance and irrationalism with increasing success.

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THE public lecture arranged by the R. A. I. on 14th December last, at the Blavatsky Lodge, when Mr. M. N. Roy spoke on "The Spiritual Genius of India," was a great success.

The hall was full to capacity, more than 500 persons being present. Many had to stand for want of sitting accommodation. Mr. Roy made the subject very interesting and instructive and presented his arguments in his usual able manner. He succeeded in debunking the prevalent notion that spirituality is the monopoly of Indian civilisation. He effectively proved that Western civilisation had also passed this phase of "spirituality" at a certain stage of its development. We hope to publish the full speech in our next issue.

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THE proposals of peace to warring nations to end the present conflict coming from His Holiness the Pope sound strange when we remember the record of Vatican diplomacy so effectively and devastatingly revealed by Mr. Joseph McCabe in his *Papacy in Politics Today*. It is too much to expect us to forget so soon the Pope's alliance with Hitler and Mussolini, the *Te Deum* sung at the Cathedral of Milan after the rape of Abyssinia, the picture of Catholic bishops blessing Italian armies and instruments of destruction going out to pour death and ruin on fellow Christian across the frontier and the record of Catholic intrigue in Spain. And now, after doing all that can be done to promote violence and brutality they want to sooth our ears with proposals of peace but we know that a leopard never changes its spots.

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THE Ismailites Khoja community, a microscopic sect of Indian Muslims is all agog with preparations to celebrate the Diamond Jubile of its religious Head (Hazar Imam) the Aga Khan. Who does not know the Aga Khan with all his fabulous wealth, his horses

and English wife. The occasion being the Dimond Jubilee of his accession to the religious-gadi of his community, he will be weighed against his weight and dimonds.

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**T**HE purchase of thousands of dimonds necessary to equal the weight of the Aga Khan will be done with donations made by each and every member of his community and on being weighed, the dimonds will be presented to the Aga Khan. On his Golden Jubilee he was weighed against his weight in gold. And, he ain't a small weight either, over 300 lbs. I should say.

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**J**UST think of it! A man may spend his lifetime digging for dimonds in the mines of Kimberley, and I am afraid, he would not collect dimonds even one-fourth his own weight. And now, just imagine, finding yourself one fine morning in possession of dimonds equal to the weight of your own body. Isn't it astounding, incredible?

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**H**ERE'S another instance of what colossal wealth is spent on religious institutions and religious heads. His Holiness the Taher Saifuddin, the Head-priest of the Dawoodi Bohras, another microscopic sect of Indian Muslims, with donations collected from the members of his community has made a canopy of gold and silver (gold 5,000 tolas and silver 450,000 tolas) costing in all Rs. 10,00,000 about £70,000. This canopy is to be sent to Najaf in Iraq to be placed on the tomb of Hazrat Ali, the first Calipha after Prophet Mohamed as believed by Shia Muslims. (There are two vast divisions of Muslims; One Shia and the other Sunni; the former believe Ali as the first Calipha and the latter do not). Ali lived some 1300 years ago. The present canopy on his tomb was made of copper which now will be replaced by the one made of gold and silver.

## CORRESPONDENCE

### Rama and Sambuka

Dear Mr. Karve,

I have just received, and have gone through the leading article by your-self in the November issue of REASON. In that excellent article of yours, please let me point out the slight slip which occurs where you say that Rama beheaded Sambuka for 'studying the Vedas'. *Perhaps* it may be a popular notion (and I am not at all sure of it) that the (of course) unjustifiable beheading was due to that cause or excuse. But as you may see from our RAMA-RAJYA, it was the practising of *tapas*, which, as stated in all our Ramayanic legends (and themes, including the *Uttara-Rama-charitam*), earned for Sambuka the decapitation at Rama's hands. In RAMA-RAJYA, also, you will find even the point discussed, whether *tapas* could be deemed to be forbidden to Sudras (like Sambuka) according to the ideology of our ancients.

(Karwar; 23.11.1940.)

S. D. N.

**I**S it not strange while millions of people in India can hardly afford a square meal a day such fabulous amount should be spent for religious humbug. One is staggered by the depth of ignorance and brazenness of the exploiters of these poor deluded masses who toil and sweat all their life only to be deprived of a large part of the earning of their labour to be used for the perpetuation of their intellectual slavery.

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**J**UST a little thought on the tremendous amount of harm done by ignorance, superstition and organised religion should urge all progressive minded men and women to do all they can to strengthen the Rationalist Association of India which is with such persistent courage, carrying on the mighty task of spreading the light of Reason throughout this country.



# CHRIST AND BUDDHA

**Their teachings identical, yet different**

*By Dr. G. Y. Chitnis*

**C**HRISTMAS is a very joyous occasion for the Christians; it is supposed that Jesus christ was born on the twenty-fifth of December; really speaking one does not know when he was born; the biographical information which is available in the authentic gospels indicates twenty third of December as the birth day of Jesus; but we need not enter into the domain of Higher Criticism; it is not vital to know if Jesus was born on the twenty-fifth of December or on the twenty-third; what is of greater importance is that he was born.

## **Strange identity**

Five hundred years before the birth of Christ Gautama Buddha was born in India. There is such a strange likeness between the teachings of Buddha and Christ that scholars like Lokamanya Tilak were led to the conclusion that Christ must have borrowed his teaching from the Buddhists. But here again we need not enter into a detailed discussion of this theory; there is certainly a likeness between the teachings of these two great teachers. I will go further and suggest that from a purely ethical standpoint, Buddhist teaching stands on a much higher level than the teaching of Christ; even then we must remember that the general philosophical outlook of the one was fundamentally different from the other and it is because of this fundamental difference that we conclude that although the teaching of these two great prophets is almost identical we are not justified in saying that the one has borrowed it from the other.

## **What is soul**

Buddha had developed a purely negative outlook on life. To him the soul was nothing

but a bundle of impressions and sensations acquired through countless births and rebirths; that means that when this soul is freed from all these impressions and sensations, man attains freedom; the soul itself disappears; this is what Buddha calls *Nirvana*. In order to attain this condition every mortal must devote himself disinterestedly to social service; in order to facilitate the performance of social service Buddha began propagating a particular code of ethics.

## **Buddha and civilisation**

It is obvious that it is not possible to build any kind of civilisation upon the basis of this negative attitude towards life. Because civilisation must always have a positive, materialist basis. To construct any kind of social system and any kind of civilisation it is necessary first to think in terms of materialism and from this point of view Buddha's code of ethics proved absolutely impractical. This was one of the principal reasons why Buddhism was finally driven out of India; it is true that Buddhism has now spread in China, Japan and Burma but it must be remembered that this expanding Buddhism has given up its original negative outlook on life and has adopted a positive one.

## **Fundamental principles**

In India the revival of Brahmanism became the lifework of the great philosopher, Shankaracharya; He of course played a vital part in driving Buddhism out of India yet there is such a close similarity between his doctrine of unqualified monism and the fundamental principles of original Buddhism that Ramanujacharya in his *Shri Bhashya* does not hesitate to call Shankar, Buddhist in disguise.

### Unqualified monism

But Shankar was not content merely with reviving Brahmanism; he was also concerned with the reconstruction of Hindu society and it was impossible to achieve that task on the basis of unqualified monism; that is why he introduced the doctrine of Maya which left a good deal of scope of the material reconstruction of society; he had of course proclaimed to the world that the world was unreal yet at the same time he realised that an enduring society must have a materialist basis. The principle of *varnashramadharma* was a part of the current tradition; he made use of it for reconstituting Hindu society. But his socioio-gical principles were vitiated by the inherent contradiction between philosophical nihilism and practical positivism and the historian has made known to us the tragic consequences of that contradiction from which the Hindu society has ever since been suffering.

### A Carpenter

Jesus Christ followed exactly the opposite method; he was not a sanyasi; he had not given up the world; aware that he was an illegitimate child he did not hesitate to carry on his step-father's business. Joseph was a carpenter and Jesus when he came of age also became a carpenter.

### His followers

At the age of thirty he began to preach his gospel; his first followers were drawn from the fishermen, the publicans and the prostitutes. He collected them together and began to preach; the burden of his preaching was "Repent ye, for the Kingdom of God is at hand." To Jesus the greatest sin was the sin of hypocrisy. The winebibbers, and the debauchees, he was firmly convinced, could get rid of their sins if only their hearts could be purified by the fire of repentance; but those who make a profession of religion, are always anxious to be regarded as religious and pure and who wear a perpetual mask of hypocrisy to maintain their prestige can never attain Salvation. They

will be thrown in outer darkness where there is gnashing of teeth." To conduct regular divine service, to wear long robes and phylacteries and shout one's prayers aloud so that every body will hear them will not lead to the Kingdom of Heaven; but those who are pure in heart and meek and love men as brothers will easily enter the Kingdom of God even if they do not perform their worship according a prescribed form. "If thou bringest thy offering to God and rememberest thou hast aught against thy brother, leave the offering and first get reconciled to thy brother."

### Interim-Ethics

This part of the teaching of Christ is positive and an average man can easily practise it; but the second part of his teaching is really impractical and cannot be of the slightest use for social reconstruction. The life of Christ can be divided in two parts; in the beginning he started his preaching just like an ordinary Jewish Rabbi; afterwards he developed the notion that he was the special messenger of God and since then his teaching became purely eschatological; the complexion of his teaching suddenly changed when he thought that the world was coming to an end immediately and that the Kingdom of God would be established on earth before his very eyes. He then formulated a certain code of conduct to be practiced during the waiting period and this is known as the interim ethics.

### Universalism

From the standpoint of civilisation the negative teaching of Buddha and the eschatological teaching of Christ are equally useless; because as I have said above civilisation must have an essentially materialist basis; man is a social animal and hence if he wants to build up family life and create some social system of which this family is a unit, he has to discard the teaching of Christ and Buddha. Every social reconstruction must base itself upon a practical recognition of man's desires, his ambitions and his needs. As this society progresses man's out-

look on life becomes more liberal and wider; today he concerns himself only with his family; but tomorrow he will look upon his own community as a family; day after tomorrow he may develop the same intensity of affection and love for his own country and a time will come when he will look upon the whole human race as one family. But if you try to reconstruct society upon the basis of the principles of universalism without taking into account man's intellectual and spiritual limitations, the society will perish and man will regress to a more barbarous condition.

That is why man should always have his feet firmly planted upon the earth and then if he could look at the stars in heaven that will be a sign of progress; but if he leaves his foot-hold on the ground and begins to soar high to catch hold of the stars he is sure to fall down and break his neck.

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# What Science Is

By Max Eastman.

(Reproduced from *THE MODERN QUARTERLY*)

SEEING the Wonders Wrought by Scientists in the sphere of physics, chemistry, biology, we cannot help reflecting that if the same methods could be brought to bear on social and political problems, all might be well. That is the thought behind the Brain Trust. It explains the late craze for Pareto. It is the main reason why Marxism gains such a hold upon our progressive intelligentsia. We are confronted as a society with desperate problems and have lost our faith in untrained common sense, in magic formulae, poetic vision, prayer or pious faith, to solve them. We feel that scientific understanding and procedure, the scientific attitude of mind as a public policy, is our sole hope.

It is of general importance, therefore, to be very definite about what science is. It is of special importance to radicals in their task of reappraising the Marxian philosophy.

Science stems mainly from practical common sense, and to its major prophet, Professor Huxley, "trained and organized common sense" seemed an adequate definition of it. Its results aspire to be "common"—that is, accessible to, and verifiable by, everybody who has the leisure and ability to understand them; it has no kinship with privately delightful subjective belief; and its concept of the source and nature of knowledge as derived ultimately from experience, derived by the methods of observation, experiment and rational calculation, and subject to the obvious practical test of action. To be sensible—if you could be sensible enough!—is for a scientific mind the highest wisdom.

There is indeed little to distinguish the scientific thinker from the man of practical, or "good," common sense, except the superior system, order, scope, exactitude of his data, and his more strenuous and thoughtful discipline—in short, as Huxley said, *training and organization*. Common sense is amateur; science is expert.

In order to become expert, however, practical common sense had to isolate itself from certain more ingratiating preoccupations with which in its amateur condition it had often been confused: from sorcery and magic, charlatanism, pseudo-science, poetry, religion and religious metaphysics. To complete Huxley's

definition, therefore, we have to distinguish science from what is centrally implied by each of these other terms.

## II.

It is fairly obvious that the witch who proposed to cure cancer with a poultice of toad's knuckles and the ears of bats killed in the third phase of the moon in October, and pronouncing over it the syllables *Me mo fi sum fidoo fidoo fiducium*, was not using her mind the way a man was who when wounded in battle tightened a thong round his limb to stop the blood-flow. And yet it is not easy, especially when the two kinds of thinking are mingled as is usual in the same mind, to define this difference. It might seem sufficient to distinguish science from magic by saying that its assertions are reliable, its predictions come true, its procedures actually produce the proposed result. But why is this so? The distinction between them is not one of emotional motive nor general mental attitude; both the scientist and the magician attempt to change, or adjust themselves to, a world which they conceive as impersonal. The distinction lies in their attitude to the unchangeable or uncontrollable element in that world. The magician ignores this element, or reduces it in his conceptions to a minimum. The desired end plays the predominant part in his thinking; the given facts play almost no part at all, but in many cases, he spends the major part of his time ascertaining their exact character and defining the relations among them that are fixed—the manner in which they invariably coexist and succeed one another. He may indeed spend all of his time that way, in clean oblivion of any wish to change or control the world. But in any case his effort at change or control are based upon and guided by a definition of what is unchangeable and uncontrollable. They are based upon what is called "irreducible fact." The scientist has, to recall the words of Professor Bridgman, an attitude of almost religious humility before fact.

He has also, however, a rather irreligious pride in dragging facts out into the open sunshine where they can be passed around for inspection, and have their presumed relations debated and exhaustively tried out. That too differentiates him from the Magician. He is

an implacable enemy of the occult. He really wants to know; the magician wants not to know. The "numerologists," for instance, a frequent survival of this type in our American leisure class, can tell you by name the amount of love-genius in your soul. But they cannot point out any factual connection between the spelling of your name and the attributes of your soul. And it is of the essence of their pleasure in numerology that no such connection should be revealed. Nothing would more quickly destroy and disperse their cult than for somebody actually to discover, verify, delimit, and define a dependable relation between one's character and the number of letters in his name. Their whole doctrine would then come down from the world of mystery into the matter-of-fact world, and be no longer either of interest or profit to them.

### III.

Between the man of expert common sense and the primitive magician there stands a wavering type, also commonly identified as an enemy of science, the quack or charlatan. Charlatanism arises in almost every branch of knowledge. It seems an inevitable by-product of the evolution of the scientific point-of-view, and is no such simple thing as deliberate swindling of the public. The charlatan has often a genuine interest in knowledge, and will offer his good offices on occasion with no pecuniary motive whatever. He dwells in a mental twilight where the line between science and some magic practice is unclear. He dwells in a moral twilight which does not demand that lines be clear. He deceives himself as well as his victim; he keeps up in himself with ingenious skill a more primitive mental condition than such skill warrants. He cultivates credulity. He is a reversion rather than a perversion, and stubbornly but half aware of his kinship with savages—often, indeed, sincerely self-convinced that he represents an outpost in the slow march of knowledge.

It is the charlatanism in Alexis Carrel's book, *Man the Unknown*, which made it so prodigiously popular—charlatanism mixed up in fatal doses with science. A purer example of the charlatan in our midst is the Georgian or Armenian, Gurdjieff, whom I had the pleasure of meeting at his institute at Fontainebleau, an institute of health made dubiously famous by the death therein of Katherine Mansfield. Gurdjieff was friendly to me because of my radicalism, and admitted me into an inner conclave where I heard readings

from a manuscript which had been dictated to the world through his lips by Beelzebub. While a pale young man read the manuscript, Gurdjieff watched the auditors with a Beelzebubian expression, or the expression of a mischievously benevolent barn-owl, on his dark and handsome features. When the reading was over and I asked a question, he explained—I thought very astutely—that since Beelzebub was not now present, he could not answer questions, nor enter into any discussion of the text. But notwithstanding his astuteness, and that owlish expression, and Beelzebub's commonplace thoughts and very bad literary style—perhaps in part because of this—I felt that the man possessed a qualified sincerity and a genuine wish to do good. I doubt if a person so sensitive as Katherine Mansfield could have accepted his ministrations had he not. His apostle to America, A. R. Orage, one of the most cultivated and benign men of our time, was still less to be dismissed offhand as a fakir. And yet I have heard him solemnly enunciate, in a Park Avenue drawing room, beliefs literally drawn from the lore of the medicine-man and the witch-doctor. It was something more austere than honesty that he lacked—that humility before fact, that pride in overt understanding, that taste for utter clarity, which has, through the long ages, completely divorced expert common sense from magic.

### IV.

Although thus deeply opposed to it, magic contributed to the growth of science something that common sense could not, a specialized preoccupation with the control of nature. The sorcerers, however inexpert they were, were professional. And science in many cases arose as a gradual introduction of common sense standards of validity into the moonings and brewings of this profession. Certain sciences thus passed through a transitional period in which the occult was mixed enough matter-of-fact knowledge to make it acceptable even to great scientific minds. Sir Isaac Newton spent about a third of his time dabbling in alchemy, and there are many relics of this half-way science in the famous book of Robert Boyle which marked the birth of modern chemistry. Astrology was mingled in the same way with the beginnings of astronomy. The astronomer engaged by Magellan to guide him round the earth abandoned the voyage because he had cast his own horoscope and found the stars unfavourable to his going. Admiral Byrd would be glad to say good-bye to such an astronomer and it may be that Magellan was too. The man was not "scientific" enough. That is to

say, he was credulous of occult beliefs supported only by tradition, and not able to rest in doubt matters upon which real knowledge was inaccessible.

This ability to rest in doubt, to withhold belief where belief is not warranted by methodical investigation—yet more, to *suspend judgment* while such investigation is in progress—is indispensable to expert common sense and it is the part most difficult for amateurs to learn. Scepticism as a mood or habitual attitude is as old as belief and is a fruitless thing. But affirmative or scientific scepticism—the ability and resolution to say “I don’t know” when, and only exactly when, that is the fact—is a comparatively new thing in the world. It is the real “philosophy” of the scientist, and is so peculiar to him as to seem almost his defining trait. Still it is only the inseparable reverse side of that humility before fact and passion for daylight understanding, that trained and organized practical matter-of-factness, which we have already discussed.

## V.

Besides restraining belief and disregarding sensation the scientist is compelled to set aside his emotional predilections. He must not let his liking for this or that solution of a problem affect his choice. He must not let any interest of his—place, power, fortune, comfort in love, or comfortable feeling of the world—he must not let even so insidious a thing as a wish to be the solver of a problem—influence his solution. That is why the tale is so often told of how Charles Darwin almost lost the honour of introducing the theory of natural selection because he spent twenty years collecting evidence before he would give his great idea to the public—and of Isaac Newton, waiting almost as long for similar reasons before announcing his theory of gravitation. Those two incidents are symbolic of what is morally most impressive about science, its passion for an impersonal goal. A patriot may have more or less pure devotion to his country; a warrior, a poet, a philanthropist, may reconcile many motives in his overheated breast. But a scientist, by his very definition, and in so far as he is a scientist, must be single in his search of truth. His very test of truth, his litmus paper for detecting its presence, is that it shall be capable of objective verification—capable of verification by all honest and adequate minds, no matter what their tastes and points of view and passionate wishes in the

field may be. By taking that word “common”—so lightly spoken in the phrase common sense—and raising it up into a standard of the validity and inward respectability of his own thoughts, he has condemned himself to a kind of sainthood that is hard to find elsewhere in this modern world. He may be more or less of a scientist, but in so far as he is a scientist he has singleness of purpose.

This does not mean—I hope it is obvious—that scientists are without feeling, or that their researches are pure of all relevance to action and supernaturally cut off from the usual theme of the brain’s labor. What to do? An examination of the body of ideas actually called science would show that an exceedingly small part of it is irrelevant either to man’s interests or his purposeful activities. Therefore there is something unscientific as well as snobbish bound up in the cult of “pure” science—the Aluminum Tower attitude, as we might call it, for it is similar in texture and surface polish to the Ivory Tower in art. There is such a thing, of course, as pure curiosity, but it is not at all elevated or unusual. Almost anybody would be interested to know, if he could be reliably informed, what is the average number of clover stems per square mile in the region between New York and Philadelphia taking the ocean for one boundary and the Pennsylvania R.R. for another, and what the ratio is therein of four-leaved to three-leaved clovers. The knowledge would be exact, quantitative, generalized. It would meet all the requirement of the concept of “pure” science, but anyone who set out to acquire it would probably arrive in an insane asylum before he reached Newark, New Jersey.

No matter how pure science, it chooses its subject matter under the general guidance of human aims or interests and it orders this subject matter by means of a conceptual apparatus in the formation of which practical activities play a major part. On the other hand no matter how practical science is, nor how passionate the purpose that motivates it and marks out the field of its inquiry, that purpose and passion must be made clearly conscious and set deliberately aside during its inquiry, and must have no influence upon its definition of the relevant facts. In that sense practical science is entirely pure. And as pure science is to some degree inevitably practical, there is no great depth to the distinction between them. They both stand in complete contrast to that kind of thinking in which our conception of

the facts is in any part determined by our passion. As Bertrand Russell says:

The kernel of the scientific outlook is a thing so simple, so obvious, so seemingly trivial, that the mention of it may almost excite derision. The kernel of the scientific outlook is the refusal to regard our own desires, tastes and interests as affording a key to the understanding of the world.

I do not know why Mr. Russell thinks this is so simple and trivial a thing, unless because he himself has so spontaneous a genius for it. To the average man the main object of speculation is to get hold of some sort of belief that will sit comfortably in his breast. And certainly the most persistent and most threatening enemy of the scientific attitude is the disposition of men to think what they want to think, and of men and institutions to bend the result even of experimental investigation, and pervert its authority, to the support of their purposes and states of passion.

In celebrating the five hundred and fiftieth anniversary of Heidelberg University, its Nazi professor of philosophy, Dr. Ernest Krieck, declared:

The science of a nation is a part of its total life, and is therefore bound by the necessities, direction and purposes of the national life.....We seek a science that forms the whole of a man's character in accordance with the great racial and political task before us.

All mature minds, in Germany and elsewhere, realize that this attempt, not merely to employ the findings of science for the purposes of the totalitarian state, but to bend these findings to the demands of totalitarian passion, will be, if successful, the end of German science. It will perhaps appear in this retrospect the chief of Hitler's crimes against civilization.

## VI.

A more ancient emotional and institutional enemy of science is religion. Religion conflicts with science not only as magic does by opposing its own occult procedure—prayer and sacrifice to the practical way of getting things done, but still more by opposing to the general attitude of restrained emotion and suspended judgment in which scientific investigation must proceed, its foreordained belief in an emotionally satisfying total picture of the world. I do not mean by religion, of course, a sense of the mystery of being, or the emotions which poetic people have had, and always will have, in

contemplation of the concept of the unknown, I think Einstein is wrong in applying the word religion to his feeling of "the variety of human desires and aims, and the nobility and marvelous order which are revealed in nature and in the world of thought." Religion means, or in the interest of straight thinking ought to mean, belief that the external world, or some power in it, is interested in the interests of men. The religious believer persuades himself that the world is softer than it is, and that we know more about it than we do. The scientist has courage to face the hard facts of our human situation, and abide within the limits of our slowly advancing knowledge.

Thus the conflict between science and religion is more abrupt and violent than that between science and magic. The difference is not only one of procedure and degree of attention to fact; it is a clash of two contradictory attitudes toward the world. For this very reason it is easy to acquire the trick of keeping both science and religion alive in separate chambers of the same brain. They do not conflict because of the completeness of the separation. Until the separation is accomplished, however, science cannot flourish in any brain. The slightest admixture of piety among the motives which bring a scientist to his conclusion would vitiate the conclusion. Even those scientists who in their private or Sabbath day selves are accustomed to commune with a Deity, will accept this statement. The more astute of those whose concern is to defend the belief in the Deity also accept it. St. Augustine himself, at the beginning of the long warfare between science and Christian theology, took such a position.

It very often happens, that there is some question as to the earth or the sky, or the other elements of this world respecting which one who is not a Christian has knowledge derived from certain reasoning or observation, and it is very disgraceful and mischievous and of all things to be carefully avoided, that a Christian, speaking of such matter as being according to the Christian Scriptures, should be heard by an unbeliever talking such nonsense that the unbeliever, perceiving him to be as wide from the mark as east from west, can hardly restrain himself from laughing.

It was not difficult in those days to maintain such an equilibrium, because the field occupied by science was limited, its conclusions were not in a sweeping way contrary to those of the church. So long as it confined its question-



asking and its matter-of-fact investigation to things like "the earth or the sky"—and not disturb their relative positions as demanded by the stories in the Bible—it was just as well to allow science its sovereignty and avoid being laughed at as an ignoramus.

When, however, science began to move the earth and the sky around, and perform similarly irreverent miracles with the other elements of this world, and moreover to extend inward its matter-of-fact investigation from this world to man himself—his mind, his morals, his political and social ways and destinies, which were the peculiar sphere of operation of the church—it was no longer possible to get out of the argument by backing out. It became necessary either to destroy the scientist, or else to reduce the cogency and conclusiveness of his views by introducing into them, or, perhaps, around behind them, the more credulous conception of man's nature and position in the universe demanded by religion.

There thus arose, just as in the case of magic, a mixture of religion with science, or an effort to save religious faith in the face of science—to keep going, in spite of the scepticism and austere matter-of-factness of the scientific procedure, *and out of range, of it*, a relic of the personal relation to the world. That mixture is philosophy, in the pious and soulupholding meaning of the term. It differs from theology in that, instead of opposing science with a contrary belief, it accepts the scientific procedure, but shows in some ingenious way—notably by demonstrating that the whole thing, facts and method results and all, is taking place within a "Universal Mind"—that the contrary belief is still true.

Unfortunately there is no word in our language to distinguish philosophy in this sense from the effort of sublimely curious minds to develop the most general implications of science, to reconcile its conflicts, investigate it with its own method, and criticize it from the standpoint of its own cool search for fact. That too is called philosophy, but it is really an integral part of the development of the scientific point-of-view. A very different thing from the wish-fulfillment philosophy the philosophy which abandons doubt and clarify and austere humility before fact, and where science mutters its honest "I don't know." cries seductively, "I can tell you!" Philosophy of this kind science had to set aside as substantially identical with religion in order to achieve its

growth, and we must set it aside in order to achieve our definition of science.

### VIII.

Science, then, is Distinguished from common sense by its degree of system and expertness; from magic and occult ritual, no matter how systemized and expert, by its concern for facts and the invariant relations among them; from charlatanism and pseudo-science by its austere mental honesty and its sceptical equilibrium; from poetic literature by its loyalty to generic and practical concepts as against particular and immediate perception; from religion and metaphysical belief by its refusal to allow interest or emotion to influence its judgment of fact.

The traits of character required to develop a method and a body of results sufficient to distinguish science from these other uses of the mind, are: patience in investigation and clarity in calculation; singleness of purpose; the power to suspend judgment, to remain if need be for a lifetime in doubt: the gift of abstraction, of thinking about things definitely but without too much intrusion of their sensuous qualities; the skill to hold in suspense one's own tastes and passions, a skill which demands discipline of the most rigorous kind. Without these traits, science, as a thing distinct from common sense, from magic, pseudo-science, charlatanism, poetry, religion, religious philosophy, and tendentious belief in general, could hardly have come into being. There are, however, two other traits which belong peculiarly to science in modern times. One is modesty, for science has become a co-operative enterprise in which the cranky and egotistical 'genius' is more than ever out of place. The other is openmindedness, for scientific knowledge is in a state of fluid growth, and even its most assured hypotheses are subject to correction and development.

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# That There is a Fundamental Conflict Between Religion and Science

Debate between Mr. W. G. Cook, of the Rationalist Society, Australia, and Mr. Frank Coaldrake, of the Brotherhood of St. Laurence.

(Reproduced from the *Rationalist Australia*)

## Mr. W. G. Cook

**N**O one is better fitted to be the spokesman for biological science than is Professor Julian Huxley. In his book, "Religion Without Revelation," he makes what some of you may consider a rather surprising statement: "There are many well-intentioned people to-day who will tell you that the conflict between religion and science is over. *It is not so.* What has been rather loosely called the conflict between science and religion is just reaching its acute phase." (Emphasis is ours.)

Of late, in some quarters, not unsuspect, there has been fostered the legend that science has rediscovered God, that the long conflict, for no one would be so foolish as to deny that there has been a conflict, is over. Science has become more humble. Religion has been purified of unessential crudities. Their relations are now harmonious.

This is, I imagine, largely due to the writings of a few mathematical physicists, in no way representative of physicists generally, who in their popular works have shown some mystical trends. Einstein has said that there are certain physicists who are illogical and romantic in their popular works. Of Eddington's speculations on indeterminism and free will, Einstein says: "That nonsense is not merely nonsense: it is objectionable nonsense." (Reported in "Where Science is Going," by Max Planck.)

Still some people, who have taken the tentative speculations of these two men too seriously, have been, as Professor J. D. Bernal, the great crystallographer, points out, in "The Social Function of Science," "deluded into believing that idealism rules in science at a time when materialism is winning all along the line."

But whatever the reason for this wishful thinking on the part of the religionists, it is clear, I think, that not only has there been a conflict between religion and science, not only is there a conflict to-day, but there will always

be a conflict while religion lingers on, for the conflict is a fundamental one which admits of no compromise.

At this stage it is desirable that we should define our terms. This is particularly necessary with the word religion, for there is no more ambiguous word in our language. We reject entirely all definitions in purely secular terms, such as devotion to the welfare of humanity. Our definition must be arrived at, not by an intellectual effort in which we construct a definition of religion that pleases us, but as a result of examining the evidence provided by the religions. We go to the cultural anthropologists who have made a special study of religious phenomena. Sir James Frazer, than whom there is no grater authority in the field of comparative magic and religion, gives this definition:

"By religion I understand a propitiation, or conciliation, of powers superior to man, which are believed to direct and control the course of Nature and of human life." He points out that there are two aspects of religion, a theoretical and a practical. There is a belief in a supernatural being, and a practice consequent on that belief. "No man is religious," he says, "who does not govern his conduct in some measure by the fear or love of God". We could quote similar definitions by other great sociologists, such as Westermarck, or by a specialist in the psychology of religion like Leuba, or by an anthropologist like Rivers. The theologians of the Christian Church, such as Dr. Rumble of the Roman Catholic Church, or the Rev. William Shaw of the Methodist Church, define religion in a way that accords with the above definition.

There is probably less difficulty about the word science. "Science," the great Huxley says, "is systematised natural knowledge." But we must go further. Bertrand Russell, in his book, "Religion and Science," says that "science is the attempt to discover, by means of observation and reasoning based upon it, first, particular facts about the world, and then

laws connecting facts with one another, and (in fortunate cases) making it possible to predict future occurrences."

Since we are concerned to-night more particularly with the Christian religion, though the conflict, as we will show, is a fundamental one between all religion and science, I may here refer to the primary Christian belief that a God created the world out of nothing.

For the scientist the existence of the world is a given fact about which it is foolish to ask the question, "Why?" The Christian believes that there is an intelligent and beneficent purpose in the stream of events. The scientist says, with Julian Huxley, that purpose is a term invented to denote a particular operation of the human mind, and should only be used where a psychological basis may reasonably be postulated; and remember that the neurologist, Professor Berry, never tires of reiterating "no neurone—no mind".

### Rival World Views.

At this point we may just briefly note that religion knows a dual order—the natural and the supernatural, the profane and the sacred. Science knows only the natural order. Religion is other-worldly in its outlook; is concerned with this world only. Christianity tells us that the chief end of man is to glorify God and serve him forever. Its main concern has been the salvation of the individual soul, whatever that may be, in a "spiritual" world. The aim of science is to improve man's lot here.

We see, then, that the conflict between science and religion is the conflict between naturalism and supernaturalism. *It is a conflict between rival interpretations of the same phenomena.* The supernaturalist or religionist believes in superhuman volition operating in Nature. He projects into the outside universe, and outside of the universe, certain human characteristics. Now, Sir James Frazer points out that a belief in superhuman beings who rule the world, and with whom we can maintain social relations, clearly assumes that the course of Nature is to some extent elastic or variable. This implied elasticity or variability of Nature is in direct and fundamental conflict with the basic principle of science, which is determinism, the inevitability of causal sequences, or, as we may put it, the uniformity of experience.

Let us illustrate the world view of religion, considering more particularly the Christian religion. It is based on the belief in a personal God who created and sustains the universe,

and exercises a conscious control over it. We will illustrate this from the New Testament, and from the teachings of the churches to-day.

In St. Matthew's Gospel, Chapter 11, verse 25, we read: "At that Jesus answered, and said, 'I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and the prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes'."

Again, at the time of the betrayal, we are told that Jesus said to Peter: "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels."

In our own time we have witnessed days of national prayer, in which all religious denominations from the Roman Catholic to the Salvation Army have taken part. *This shows that the belief in supernatural being who controls the course of Nature and of human life is still the basis of Christian religion.*

This, then, is a fundamental characteristic of the Christian religion, and, indeed, of religion itself, and therein lies its basic conflict with science. There are certain types of explanation that science cannot admit. The description of natural phenomena as due to providence or to disembodied spirits, or to a God, is incompatible with scientific determinism.

The general world view of science is therefore in conflict with the general world view of religion. Science reduces "God" to a nullity, for only so can it put forward an explanation of the changes that take place, as the consequence of the interaction of natural forces. A God who does nothing is no God, and has no meaning for religion. Science is based on a uniformity of experience, an unvarying and unvariable sequence of events. As Surgeon Rear-Admiral Beadnell says, "All the discoveries that have enriched civilisation have, without one single exception, been arrived at via the mechanistic and deterministic method of approach, while Idealism has ever been the clogging fog of obscurantism." We could multiply our authorities for this view endlessly. We will just quote one from physical science, one from biological science, and one from psychology.

Einstein says: "Indeterminism is quite an illogical concept." The great Cambridge biochemist, Joseph Needham, in "The Sceptical Biologist," says that "Determinism is the only air that science can breathe," and that "practically all working biologists admit that the scientific approach stands committed to the

mechanistic theory of life"; "the scientific and religious frames of mind are fundamentally antagonistic."

Hart, in his classic little work, "The Psychology of Insanity," says that "so long as we are thinking psychologically and scientifically, we must subscribe to all the implications of the law of causation."

Religion is based on belief in a capricious universe, a universe controlled by a directing mind that is not only immanent but also transcendent, while science will have none of this whatsoever.

### Rival Methods.

From this fundamental conflict of world views, we pass on to the rival methods of attaining knowledge. Science follows the method of induction. Time allows us only to outline this method, without illustration.

The first step is the patient and laborious collection of facts, by observation and experiment.

The second step is the classification of these facts into series or sequences.

The third step is the formulation of an hypothesis, formula or law, which describes the classified facts in the most comprehensive and convenient manner. This general rule is at first not positively asserted. The theory is under the strict governance of facts. As soon as a fact incompatible with the theory is discovered, the theory must be modified so as to include the new fact, or, if that proves impossible, then the theory is abandoned. The theory is subjected to experimental tests, and applied to hitherto unobserved phenomena, and, if these take place in accordance with the theory, it is confirmed. This inductive method does not lead to absolute or final truth, and this is recognised by the scientist. The human mind with its imperfections, developed in response to a certain environment, is not capable of attaining to absolute knowledge.

Now it is obvious, I think, that the method of religion is quite opposed to this. The Catholic Church indeed teaches as a dogma that belief in God may be attained by the unaided reason; nevertheless, the method advocated is the deductive method, or reasoning from certain general principles. This is a dangerous method, for the first assumptions may be unverifiable or untrue, and the reasoning based on them fallacious. It is not the scientific method, which begins with particular facts.

But then religion, including the Catholic religion, professes to have a divine revelation

of truths which the human intellect by itself cannot attain. Let me first quote the Rev. Dr. Rumble, of the Roman Catholic Church: "God", he says, "has given to mankind a supernatural destiny higher than any merely natural destiny, and this requires a revelation higher than that which could be attained by the merely natural reason". And again: "The perception of the vital force and the sheer reality of the truths God has revealed, with consequent belief in them, *requires grace from God.*" (Emphasis is ours).

You could not get a theory of knowledge in more fundamental opposition to the scientific method. And let me remind Mr. Coaldrake that three-fifths of the Christian world is Roman Catholic.

But essentially the same view is found throughout the Protestant sects. Rev. William Shaw, an official theologian for the Methodist Church in Australia, begins his list of Christian doctrines with this announcement: "That the Holy Scriptures are the record of God's revelation to mankind, and embody the authoritative doctrines of the Christian religion."

The gospel Jesus repeatedly refers to knowledge directly revealed by God, e.g., Matthew 16-17:

"Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."

Even the modernists in the churches cling to a progressive revelation given by God to man, and not attained by man's own efforts, which culminated in the revelation of Jesus as found in the New Testament.

The Christian surely does not deny that there has been a revelation and that through that revelation religion reaches certain final truths, not otherwise attainable.

Dean Inge has admitted that the existence of God cannot be proved. He says: "Almost all sound theologians would now admit that no a priori proof of the existence of God is possible. The real proof is of the nature of a valid inference, and it falls short of demonstration." ("God and the Astronomers.")

Let us apply the inductive method to the belief in a benevolent and omnipotent deity who created the universe. This is fundamental in the Christian belief. Is it in accordance with all the facts, with the existence of evil, of suffering, particularly in children and in the animal kingdom and so on? Bishop Barnes tells us that in the evolutionary process harmful mutations arise as often as favourable ones. If an omnipotent Creator creates a universe with evil in it, is he not partially evil himself?

We are told this is one of the mysteries our finite minds cannot understand. But when faced with facts that are not harmonious with his theory, does the religious thinker modify or abandon it? No. He holds it despite the incompatible facts, and says with St. Paul: "Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known." This shows how antiscientific is the religious methods of acquiring knowledge.

Not only has the New Testament a supernatural revelation as its basis, and not only has the Christian Church throughout history and in all its denominations insisted on a Divine revelation, but it is extremely difficult to see how we could know *Divine* truths if they were not revealed. Therefore all Christians, and indeed, all religionists, could agree with these words of Pope Pius IX: "Moreover the Catholic Church has ever held, and now holds, that there exists a twofold order of knowledge, each of which is distinct from the other, both as to its principle and object. As to the principle, because in the one we know by natural reason in the other, by divine faith; as to the object, because beside those things to which natural reason can attain, there are proposed to our belief mysteries hidden in God, which, unless by Him revealed, cannot come to our knowledge."

**Science will not admit such claims.** Prof. Tyndall, in his famous Belfast address as President of the British Association, flung down the gage of battle. "We claim, and we shall wrest from theology, the entire domain of cosmological theory."

### The Criteria of Truth.

The criterion of truth for the Roman Catholic is an infallible Church: for the Protestant it is the divine revelation in the Bible. Both criteria are rejected by the scientist, whose sole criterion of truth, a partial and relative truth, is verification in nature.

There is, then, first a fundamental conflict between the world views of science and religion, and, secondly, a fundamental conflict in the methods by which science and religion build up their knowledge.

### Rival Techniques.

Science and religion also provide us with techniques for controlling our environment and, to put it crudely, for getting what we want. And when I say for getting what we want, I do not refer only to our material needs, but also for the resolving of mental conflicts, the building of character, and for achieving a

sound, sane, harmonious development of our best potentialities.

Since the world views of science and religion, and the methods of science and religion are in conflict, we would also expect their respective techniques to be in conflict, and this is indeed the case.

Let us begin with religion, for it occupied the field long before science developed. Religion began through primitive man's misinterpretation of subjective and objective phenomena in the times of his ignorance. Subjective experiences such as dreams and visions, the sight of the shadow, and reflections in water and so on, gave rise to a belief in a secondary self, and so the spirit world was created. The forces of nature were personified, or treated as having a mysterious life. And let us remember that all our modern conceptions of God, no matter how subtle or refined, or whether spoken of as God, or as an Absolute, or a Principle, of Concretion, are all just this primitive animism masquerading under new forms.

There was a time when the religious outlook pervaded every aspect of life. With the development of science its sphere has constantly been narrowed down.

Well, now, as Fosdick says, "In every realm of human want and craving, men have used religious methods to achieve their aims, and whether they desired good crops, large families, relief from pestilence, or success in war, they conceived themselves as dependent on the favour of heaven."

What are these religious methods, these practices which, as we saw in our definition, follow on belief in a supernatural being and form an essential part of religion itself?

By its own methods, which have already been outlined, it strives to learn what is the will of God and obey it. The religious technique combines prayer and praise, penances and a ritual observance. These have direct reference to the belief in the spiritual being worshipped by religion.

**The gospel Jesus sanctified the religious method.** We are told that He said: "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye ask anything in my name, I will do it." (St. John 14-13, 14.) You all remember the parable of the importunate widow with its lesson that "men ought always to pray and never to faint." It is clear that the gospel Jesus believed in the power of petitionary prayer.

Take the practice of the Church to-day. We have already pointed out that all the Chris-

tian Churches throughout the Empire have been joining in days of national prayer. It is also true that the Italian Catholic Clergy, according to the journal, "Time," are praying for Italy's victory. This is to be expected. It is the religious technique and will be used by religion the world over. It is also true that immediately after one day of national prayer the Belgian King surrendered the Belgian Army, and the British Army had to leave Flanders after what Churchill described as a colossal disaster. But perhaps these things are irrelevant. The churches still advocate prayer and more prayer in this time of crisis. It is the religious technique, and of course, assumes that variability in nature which science denies.

We turn now to the scientific technique. Only the general principle can be stated here, for each science has its own characteristic application of that principle. It is this: learn the laws, the causal sequences, fulfil the conditions and the consequences follow. As Fosdick says "This is as true of mind as of matter, and as true of morals as of mind." The scientific method is everywhere displacing the religious method, so much so that the religions themselves no longer trust chiefly in the religious method, but are being secularised as a condition of their survival.

We have outlined very briefly the three fundamental conflicts between religion and science: what we may term their world views, are in conflict, and from this springs the conflict between their methods and their techniques.

### An Historical Approach.

Since this is so we would expect to find this evidenced by the history of their relationship. And we do. We find that where science flourished religion was at a low ebb. When religion triumphed then science was completely suppressed. Throughout the Dark Ages there was no science in Christian Europe; with the ferment of ideas of the Renaissance science revived, and since then has developed in spite of the bitter opposition of the Church, until to-day in London less than 10 per cent. of the population attend places of worship. Let me briefly outline this history.

Science begins in Ionia in Greece about the sixth century B.C., and some authorities consider that it has never appeared anywhere except through the pervasive influence of Greek thought. Here was the cradle of free speculation about the universe. We think of Heraclitus

who saw the world in a state of flux, and Democritus who performed the amazing feat of working out an atomic theory of the universe which was to be revived 2000 years later. As Prof. Bury says: "No fantastic tales of creation imposed by sacred authority, hampered these powerful brains". He points out two highly significant things. At this early period in science, this time of free enquiry, the Greeks had no Bible, and this was both an expression and an important condition of their freedom, and, secondly, there was an absence of sacerdotalism. The priesthood was not a powerful caste able to control the State and suppress irreligious opinion.

Next, Alexandrian science reached a high degree of development in the centuries preceding the Christian era. Mathematics were advanced—Euclid lived at this time. Astronomy was developed, e.g., the lunar theory of the tides was advanced. Archimedes discovered specific gravity and settled the fundamental principles of hydrostatics. Medical science also flourished; anatomy and physiology were on a scientific basis. Dissection of the human body was carried on. This fundamental requirement for a sound knowledge of anatomy was not allowed in Christian Europe till the sixteenth century.

And what was the final end of this advanced scientific development in Alexandria? It came in the fourth century A.D. In Hasting's *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, we read: "There is no doubt that the adoption of Christianity as the State religion, and the rise of monasticism were the immediate fore-runners of a period of steady deterioration throughout the Egyptian Church. The death-knell of paganism was already rung, and with it that of the culture and freedom of philosophic thought that had made Alexandria the intellectual centre of the Hellenistic world." The great library of Alexandria was destroyed in flames. The last act in this sombre tragedy of the death of a scientific culture was even more revolting. In Alexandria at this time there was a young, beautiful and talented woman, Hypatia, who attempted to keep alight the torch of pagan culture. She was a mathematician, a teacher of the Neo-Platonic philosophy, and she was cruelly murdered by a ravening pack of Christian monks, led by Peter the Reader, the underling of Cyril, Bishop of Alexandria, and at that prelate's direct instigation. Cyril was later canonised by the Church. With this, one of the vilest deeds history records, Christianity triumphed over pagan science.



Then came the Ages of Faith, and if there is a God who delights in the prayer and praise of his creatures this was the time when he would have been well pleased, for from the borders of Western Europe to the outermost bounds of far Cathay the rosary beads clicked and the incense of adoration ascended high.

Modern science begins with Vesalius and Galileo in the sixteenth century, and the first great blow was struck at the anthropocentric view of the universe held by religion. The Inquisition pronounced judgment.

"1. The proposition that the sun is in the centre of the world and immovable from its place is absurd, philosophically false, and formally heretical, because it is expressly contrary to the Holy Scriptures.

"2. The proposition that the earth is not the centre of the world, nor immovable, but that it moves, and also with a diurnal action, is also absurd, philosophically false, and theologically considered, at least erroneous in faith."

It was a conflict between the inductive method of science and the deductive method of religion. The Christian cosmogony with the heaven and hell was overthrown.

I must pass over many interesting and important events and come to the next major crisis in the history of religion and science.

This was the acceptance of evolution, notably the evolution of man from the lower animals that Darwin did so much to establish. Again the Christian Churches showed the greatest hostility to the new discoveries and Darwin was vilified.

This was the second severe blow at the anthropocentric view of the universe. It invalidated the Christian scheme of salvation, as you will find if you read St. Paul's logical statement of it in Romans: Chapter 5, verses 12 to 21. It also invalidated a popular argument for the existence of God, namely, the teleological, or from design in nature.

Bishop Wilberforce quite truly said, "the principle of natural selection is incompatible with the word of God," and Gladstone expressed the opinion of the religious world: "Upon the grounds of what is called evolution God is relieved of the labour of creation, and in the name of unchangeable laws is discharged from governing the world."

Then finally we may mention the great revolutionary changes made by Freud in psy-

chology which have also been met with great hostility.

McDougall, a very well-known psychologist has said, "It is a matter of common knowledge that 'science' has given its verdict against the soul; has declared that the conception of the soul as a thing, or being, or substance, or mode of existence, or activity, different from, distinguishable from, or in any sense or degree independent of the body, is a mere survival from primitive culture, one of the many relics of savage superstition that obstinately persists among us in defiance of the clear teachings of modern science."

The science of cultural anthropology in the field of comparative mythology and religion has been most destructive of our religious beliefs, as readers of Sir James Frazer's monumental work, "The Golden Bough," are well aware.

That last stronghold of religion, the mystical religious experience, has been undermined by the analysis and explanations of psychologists such as Prof. Leuba and Dr. Forsyth. Here again religion vainly tries to hold back the onward march of science. Listen to this proclamation, "Psychology is trespassing beyond its proper limits in speaking on the question of religious experience." Science will not and cannot admit the claim.

The sociological sciences, still in their infancy, must be developed if society is to be stably organised and further progress is to be made. We cannot regress to outmoded and primitive habits of thought.

### Mr. Frank Coaldrake

This is a matter of faith versus reason. It is a question of how far faith is relevant to the facts of the natural world and to life, and how far reason is relevant and adequate. My opponent has just admitted that while he is prepared to make a judgment on the facts he knows there may be some relevant facts he does not know, which are known to other people. No individual knows all the facts. If you were to sit down to make a plan for life, and insist on gathering in all the facts, you would spend more time than the long course of the history of science and get nowhere. It has taken millions of men thousands of years to know the facts that are known, and how far have we gone? To live on the human level we must adopt a plan partly based on fact, based on all the facts known but partly relying on guesswork as to the probable facts in matters which are incomprehensible to

finite minds. To know the knowable facts is not enough.

To know the facts is not all. That is basic to this question. On the basis of argument the rationalist must win. He is a man skilled in argument. But you cannot run your whole life on the basis of argument! Living is more than rational dealing with the facts. We must act in faith. That does not mean we have to displace reason, for there is no conflict between faith and reason. In true science and true religion there is an identity of purpose.

There are five contentions to discuss:

1. Man is not merely a rational animal. Most men are rational, but they are more. Experience is more than the acting of the intellect. If you cut out the whole sphere of the emotions and the will, you will live a very warped existence, and will never graduate at a university. The psychological explanation of experience as consisting in elements of intellect, emotion and will must be kept constantly in mind.

2. Faith is not just a vapourous attitude of mind. It is reliance on something—and it is inborn into every one of us to place our reliance on something. Faith is not screwing your courage to the sticking point; neither is it instilled by the reasoning of our fathers and mothers. The things in which men put their faith are many and varied, but say what you may, you will have a faith in something. Objects of faithful reliance to-day include the State—how many people rely ultimately on the State? How many people will in the long run rely ultimately on democracy? On Hitler, Chamberlain, Mr. Menzies or some other person? How many are influenced in their decisions by an ultimate reliance on money to secure their happiness and security? Or on prestige? Or on God as manifest in Christ?

That thing, person, or idea on which we rely ultimately, which carries final authority with us when we are reaching a decision, is something in which we have faith. These "taboos" have always played a part in man's decisions, and always will. The external things which have an influence on man have varied from age to age, but man always pays respect to some such things.

Mr. Cook relies on science, relies entirely on his reason. It would be intellectual dishonesty for him to accept anything his reason cannot explain. To be true to his ideas, he

must suspend judgment on matters not covered by conclusive evidence. To be wholly and solely a scientist he will have to suspend judgment on so many matters that he will be forced to the inhuman situation of living in a state of suspended animation. What will he do about the myriad things he has not had time to attend to? He relies on the authority of others. Primarily his authority is his own reason and the reason of other men with the results of that reasoning summed up in the word science. He has a quite irrational faith in reason.

3. The sciences are different from Science, with a capital S. The sciences have nothing to say about reality as such, for in doing so they desert the realm of science and become philosophies. The sciences have a limited range of facts to deal with. They specialise in those facts and speak with authority on them. There is no science to put the results of all the sciences together and take a view of the whole. That is the task of a philosophy. If science undertakes the work of a philosophy it inevitably commits the fallacy of bringing the categories from one particular science to bear upon the results of the many particular sciences, each with its own categories, and the result is categorical confusion. When scientists speak on matters which they have not investigated, they speak as fools unless they rely on the findings of men who have investigated those matters.

Alexis Carrel, in "Man the Unknown," showed that if you take into consideration all the facts known scientifically about men, you still know nothing about man and mankind. There is no science to deal with man. If a science pronounces on matters beyond its sphere of reference, it is no longer scientific. Science has its limits within which it should and must work. Certain men owe it to the rest of men to work consistently by the scientific method, but not to extend such activities beyond the realm of their particular science without continuing to be scientific and take into account all the evidence available.

When a physicist pronounces on morals he speaks as a fool, unless he has read ethics as well as physics. The scientist who is a specialist in his own field may be a fool outside it.

It is the business of philosophy to take into account the findings of science and relate them to the fruits of aesthetic experience and the hardwon lessons of sheer living. There is as much to be learnt in the university of hard knocks as in the academic university. The



scientist will enlighten the ignorance of philosophy in some matters, but he will not remove the necessity for a philosophy which relates his discoveries to the results of aesthetic and practical experience.

4. Can a man know all? As Mr. Cook suggested, religion says a man cannot know all. That would be to put man on an equality with God. But religion says that man can know more than he does now, and that he can know enough for the purposes of a happy existence for all men. Religion does not say that God will reveal all if man bides his time. Man is not called to idleness. God is immanent in nature and history, and has left it to man to search actively and experiment daringly to discover the nature and purpose of God. Mr. Cook says man will know everything. Is that not just as great an act of faith as to say that man will not know everything? How do we know whether man can know all?

Man has progressively pushed back the barriers of ignorance, and knows more and more about more and more; that is, mankind as a whole does this. But individual man knows more and more about less and less. He specialises, and ipso facto, his communications with other specialists are disrupted as a consequence of relying on technical formularies. An age of specialisation becomes an age of disruption. Men have lost the secret of living together. Because he has forgotten to look for God's purpose, man cannot use his specialised knowledge to save himself. He uses it to destroy himself. This is well told in one of the stories of Book of Genesis. (But before I go on with this story, I must interpolate a comment on "Bible stories"; the stories which are preserved for us in the text of the Bible are paralleled by many stories extant in other sources. The two stories of the Creation in Genesis have many parallels in the writings of that time. They are written by the men who are the "scientists" of their age. By trying to explain the Cosmos in terms of the facts they know, men like Eddington, Einstein and Jeans are to-day doing what the "scientists" were doing in earlier days in accounts such as those now contained in the Book of Genesis. The stories in Genesis have not been accepted by men as true because declared to be so by the authorities; they won their way to authority by the truth they contained. It is the fact of a Creation which has been believed when the explanation of its method in terms of ancient sciences has been outmoded.)

The story of the Tower of Babel is relevant

on the subject of specialisation. Men set out to build a tower up to Heaven. They sought equality with God believing they knew as much as God. As they reached towards Heaven they became confused in their languages. Each man spoke a language, but there was confusion of tongues and their work was confounded. There is a parallel to-day. Man is avidly seeking to know all, is reaching for the omniscience of all. By the division of labour in the field of knowledge each man has become a specialist in this concerted effort; each man speaks his own language and there is confusion of languages. To-day in the realm of morals we cannot benefit by the work done in the realm of physics. They are different types of knowledge, diverse in their verbal expression. They can be harmonised only by the outlook which believes in man as a whole even while there are no scientific facts available about man as such.

5. There are lower and higher forms of religion. It is with religion as with science. Alchemy and witchcraft are the counterpart of superstition in religion. The sciences of to-day have risen above such elemental methods. Similarly the highest truths of religion are freed from the superstitions of idolatry and paganism. The supreme truths of religion are summed up in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, not of the Catholic Church. Looked at from this point of view, it is anomalous that men on both sides of the battlefield are now praying for victory. But not all Christians are praying for victory. Many are praying "Not my will but thine be done"—the model of prayer in the truest of religions is found in these words. The pagan attitude to prayer is that it is a method of getting your own way by bending the will of God to suit your own intentions. But prayer is not that. It is a difficult way of discovering what the will of God is. Mr. Cook has not dealt with religion at the supreme level of revealed religion. In accepting revealed religion, I do not stand for the idea that man should wait for things to be put upon him by an "inner voice." Mystical experience is real experience, but not all religionists have that experience. There is a reaching out of man's mind, an attempt to grasp stage by stage what the reality is which is embodied and manifest in the universe, in history and in man, and supremely in Christ. Religion, on any level higher than paganism, does not hinder the enquiring mind. Rather does it stimulate and foster it.

There are differences among the theologians, just as among scientists. They are main-

ly on points of interpretation, not on the fundamental point that God acts; on this, Christians are in agreement. No religionist would want to hide the fact that the Christian relies on God to do something. Religion, at this high level, is betting your life there is a God who will act reliably in a manner we must try to understand. But whatever God does there is still much left for man to do for himself in trying to come up to God's standard. There is scope for, and need of, the scientific method in the approach to these matters. The Christian says he will bring all the intellectual power at his command to bear on the situation and make up his mind as to the reasonable thing, having God in mind. Then he will act accordingly even if by ordinary standards his proposals seem impracticable. This is the pioneering spirit, and it is akin to that spirit which leads men to become discoverers in any realm of scientific investigation. This spirit has always been present in the church, even when it has not been the spirit of the authorities controlling the Church. It is not true that the Christian Church has always been traditional and conservative. It is not essentially so, since its Founder, and many of its earliest members, were the most completely revolutionary persons in history. There has always been within the church a prophetic element, not merely "foretelling," but rather with the spirit of the great prophets of Israel, daring to criticise the constituted authorities. They have dared to pioneer, dared to question conservative traditions, to risk persecution and death. There is a conservative element represented by the priests, but there is also the scientific, daring element which, in the light of the facts observed, dares to plunge ahead and make experiments in faith that they will work out. In their lives the religious method and the scientific method are not merely parallel but identical.

It is said that the scientist will explain everything. But the scientist has to speak in words and symbols. The scientist says that this table is a concatenation of atoms. Such an explanation of it is quite incomprehensible to the average man. In terms it is just as fantastic as any religious explanation and makes just as great a demand on the faith of the hearer. The expert theologian and the expert scientist have this common difficulty, that they have to make themselves understood by the inexperienced learner.

The term God is a symbol for something. Whitehead says that God is something that stands beyond, behind and within the passing flux of immediate things. He cannot get it any

clearer than that, but must go on searching. The religious attitude to life leads to that—a sure faith that the something which lies beyond our comprehension is nevertheless to be known in part. This is exactly parallel to the faith of the research worker who is held to his task by the tremendous hope that he will come at last to something at the heart which will have meaning. Faith holds him to his work. He is lead on by the faith that at the heart of things is a truth which can be discovered because there is a reliable orderliness in nature. This is exactly the attitude of faith which Mr. Cook would decry.

When any discovery explains something formerly unknown the discovery has not necessarily explained away the fact. We can find a truer explanation of some aspect to reality without explaining reality away.

The religious person believes that at the heart of the universe there is some order; and that there is a similar order within man's life. In that fluid mass called society there are certain laws and principles which must be obeyed if society is to live as such. By observing these principles and living in accordance with them, man will have a more secure and happy existence and will reach his fullest possible self-expression. It is in the endeavour to discover these principles of living within society that man searches with religious faith. He discovers that the surest practical guide is to be found in the life of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. He finds that the God of the universe is a God who, in ordering the functioning of the universe, also ordered the functioning of society. God, as seen in this light, is not merely a benevolent old gentleman, but acts on a principle of justice. He is a God of wrath as well as of love, a God who has ordered things according to righteousness so that wrong-doing leads to punishing consequences.

Religion is scientific in its method, but deals specifically with matters not covered by any of the so-far recognised sciences. It is in line with the truest sciences in that it has faith to lead it on, works from the facts of life with a view to living, and does not merely build up a system of knowledge. Science, when it does its real job, is the handmaiden of religion.

### Reply to Brother Coaldrake.

A careful reading of the arguments advanced by Bro. Coaldrake shows that he has made not even a pretence of meeting the argument advanced in the opening speech of the debate and printed in the September "Rationalist."

It was there maintained that there is a fundamental conflict between religion and science because they are rival interpretations of the same phenomena. There is first a conflict in the general world views of religion and science; then there is a conflict in the methods of attaining knowledge, science being inductive, and religion relying on faith and revelation; finally there is a fundamental conflict between the religious and scientific techniques. It was shown that the history of the relations between religion and science was evidence of this conflict.

It was Bro. Coaldrake's duty to meet this argument, with its three clearly stated propositions. He did not do so. He made no attempt to answer the affirmative case. Does it win by default?

Let us now consider the arguments presented to us. We will find that when the subject of the debate is involved it is usually in some vague and unsupported generalisation.

The opening section contains much that is repeated in later arguments; we will pause to note only two assertions. "There is no conflict between faith and reason." What is faith? We shall come to this later. "In true science and true religion there is an identity of purpose." What is "true science"? What is "true religion"? In what lies the identity of purpose? We are not told, and so cannot profitably discuss this dogmatic assertion.

Then we come to five main contentions. The first contains nothing that is new, and nothing that any atheist or agnostic or rationalist need dispute.

We ourselves have pointed out, in a leading article in this paper, that to attempt to deny the emotions their place in life is irrational, and is therefore condemned by our philosophy. The emotions are the motive forces to action, but not tools for discovering truth.

We agree with Bro. Coaldrake in his first contention, but point out its entire irrelevance to the subject under discussion, and indeed to any defence of religion.

The second argument deals with faith—defined as inborn reliance on something. The faith of the scientist, or the rationalist (in reason) or the Nazi (in Hitler) is looked upon as the same "faith" we meet with in religion.

There is an ambiguity in the use of the word "faith." When we sit in the barber's

chair, we have faith. We cannot be certain that the white-coated gentleman who approaches us waving a flashing blade is not a homicidal maniac. Yet we bare our throats to him with some confidence. There is a certain uniformity of experience behind us. But our knowledge is only probable knowledge. It may be that one day we will meet a barber to whom our unguarded throat will prove an irresistible stimulus, and our faith in him will suddenly be proved unjustifiable.

We have to differentiate between a faith based on reason, on evidence, on a uniformity of experience, that is verifiable, and the faith needed in religion. This, by its very nature, is unverifiable. One theologian tells us that faith "teaches things that are beyond reason, revealed truths that are only known to God." This faith requires "grace from God."

This supernatural gift of faith is given to those of goodwill who "submit to God's authority and pray earnestly for the light." Need we labour the point any further? Bro. Coaldrake has either abandoned the religious concept of faith for a purely natural one, or he is lamentably confused on this issue.

The third contention may be summarised by saying that there is a need for philosophy to integrate the findings of the separate sciences. There is nothing, absolutely nothing, in this third section that need be denied by the atheist or rationalist. There is also nothing that helps Mr. Coaldrake in the debate, or in the defence of religion. As an interesting question we might discuss, if time and space were available, the quotation from Carrel, but it would have no bearing at all on the subject of the debate.

The fourth section has little more relevance. Religion, we would say in answer to Bro. Coaldrake, tells us that man can know a great many things that science and modern philosophy do not pretend to know. It is because religion tells us too much, and not because it does not know enough, that we are critical. It professes to know how the universe was created, when it was created and why. It is in the inmost counsels of the Almighty and can tell us His plans for mankind. Some clergymen give us the impression that the Deity takes no step at all without prior consultation with them. It tells us that the finite can know and hold social relations with some infinite power.

Far be it from us to say that man knows, or can know, everything. It is rationalism that

says "man can know more than he does know, and that he can know enough for the purposes of a happy existence for all men."

The same analogy between the progress of religion from superstition to a higher form, and the rise of science from alchemy and so on, that was made by the Rev. Eric Owen, is made by Bro. Coaldrake. We dealt with this in our reply to the Rev. E. Owen, in the September "Rationalist," and we will not cover the same ground again.

If the argument we established in our opening speech be studied, it will be seen that the superior form of religion now expounded is in fundamental conflict with science, for it believes in a personal God who controls the universe.

We are surprised to learn that in this year of grace, 1940, when the dive bomber lays waste great areas, and indiscriminately slaughters women and children, there are people who can murmur, "Not my will but Thine be done."

Is God's will being done? If not, why not? Is he not all-powerful?

We cannot agree that the explanations of the scientist are as fantastic as religious explanations, and make as great demands on the hearer. The formulæ of the scientist are based on physical reality, and are tested and verified in a uniformity of experience. Religion explains the unknown by an incomprehensible.

Reference must be made to the final statement about science. When science is the hand-maid of religion it makes no progress. It is a pseudo-science. Astrology was the hand-maid of religion. The science of astronomy is not. Psychology has only made progress as a science since it cut loose from religious, philosophical and metaphysical pre-conceptions. Science versus Religion. Naturalism versus Supernaturalism. There is the issue. To yearn for science as the hand-maid of religion is the most idle of wishful thinking.

## BLIND FAITH.

(Continued from page 4)

sion that they are all false. Honest and intelligent religious writers have admitted that though they believe in God, his existence is a matter of faith, it cannot be proved. Such faith may possibly help them, but it is no good for anybody else and it is ridiculous to say that the existence of God is established beyond doubt. The statement shows utter absence of logic, and blind faith in an imaginary Reality which Sadhu Santinatha failed to find except in the imaginations of the faithful. I congratulate the Sadhu on his courage in declaring it to the world.

## CATHOLIC—FASCISM

ON October 4, 1940, Bishop Franziskus Rarkowski issued a pastoral letter which was directed to all Nazi soldiers of the Catholic faith and which was read in all Catholic churches. In this formal, official document, the bishop praised the Catholics for supporting Hitler's war, and from which I quote:

"The German nation which has been waging war against those who envy it for years has an untroubled conscience and knows which nations have burdened themselves before God and history with the responsibility for the gigantic struggle now raging. It knows who wantonly unleashed the fury of this war. It knows that it is waging a just war.

"The German nation has a great duty to fulfill in the face of the Eternal Almighty. Abroad and at home the Fuehrer's thanks to God that his plea for His blessing for our good and just cause was expressed more than once, and was understood."

This helps round out the picture. The record shows that the Catholic Church has always supported Fascist ideology, beginning in Italy, swinging to Poland and Ethiopia, to Spain, to Catholic-Fascism in Petain "government," to Eastern Canada, to Father Coughlin's movement in the U. S. and to Hitler's Germany. Totalitarianism and Catholicism are one and the same thing. Brutalism has always received the blessings of the Vatican.

E. HOLDMAN JULIUS.

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of arms but by ideas that liberate.

—Emile Zola.

# REASON

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Know thou thyself, presume not God to scan :  
The proper study of mankind is Man.

--Pope.

## Sentiment in Life.

THERE seems to be a curious notion about, that rationalists give no place to sentiment in life. Even people who are more or less well acquainted with the rationalist attitude seem to be under this impression. One is not sure in what sense the word is used. These people generally do not feel the necessity of being particular as regards the meaning of the words they use though they demand accuracy on the part of a rationalist. But if by sentiment they mean feelings or emotions the charge is positively ludicrous.

It is certainly not denied that rationalists are human beings and one cannot imagine a human being without feelings or emotions though we are told of a God without "body, parts, or passions" who is loving and merciful, and, on His own authority, jealous and vengeful too! Nor can we imagine a person who denies the fact that most of our thoughts and actions are actuated by feelings or emotions.

It is impossible for a rationalist to make such a statement because he is by far the better acquainted with psychology than those who are less interested in this vale of tears. A rationalist certainly asserts that one's emotions should be subservient to reason and common sense.

If it is meant that rationalists are not capable of "finer feelings" since it is even hinted that they cannot enjoy and appreciate art, music and poetry which are supposed to have nothing to do with reason, it may be pointed out that the ranks of the best poets, writers and artists in all ages are flooded with sceptics and unbelievers, and that they flourished precisely during those periods of history which are conspicuous for the spread of scepticism and unbelief.

### The Question of Morality

In argument when such people find themselves unable to hold their position in other fields such as that of anthropology, biology or psychology they either fall back on the notion just referred to or on the question of morality. They cannot believe that a person not believing in religion can at the same time be moral. And whenever they find that a person they know to be an unbeliever is straightforward, honest, and truthful, they think it a matter for generous mention as if it is an exception. But at the same time they never find it worthy of notice when they come across people who are very religious, in the accepted sense of the term, firmly believing in the much esteemed dogmas of religion, and yet possessing undesirable qualities. Perhaps that is because it is so common. Unbelief and right conduct are supposed to be incompatible, yet pious belief and undesirable qualities fit very well!

The argument that no sooner people cease to believe in God they will cease to behave themselves or be moral, is an insult to every intelligent person. It contains the insinuation that men and women need the threat of some

supernatural being or of hell to keep them on the right path. It contains an insult to believers in particular as freethinkers are not found to be any worse citizens for their unbelief, in fact the contrary, while it is urged that the believers will no longer continue to be moral if deprived of their belief in God. I protest against such an insult to our fellowmen, since I do not think that, man for man, the believer is worse than the freethinker.

Then again considering the present state of the world and the extent to which rascality, dishonesty, and other undesirable qualities are found in communities and among people untouched by atheism or scepticism, one is inclined to think that a general acceptance of atheism will not make it any worse. In fact, I think it might be a definite change for the better.

However, this whole attitude is based on a confusion of thought on the question of morality. Let us first consider what morality is. It is only when we consider man in relation to others that we begin to understand the meaning and significance of morality. "In its lower forms morality is no more than an expression of those conditions under which social life is possible, and in its higher one, an expression of those ideal conditions under which corporate life is desirable." (C. Cohen) Morality implies the relation of one human being to another or others. Morality was implicit in human society before it was explicit. Man, to a very great extent acted morally, that is, behaved in a way that was not anti-social long before he gave any thought to the consequences of his actions. If that was not so the human race would have ceased to exist long ago. Cannibalism carried to its logical conclusion would mean the extinction of that particular group. It exists, but only partially; only in relation to members outside the group or clan. The moral code is not something revealed to man by some supernatural agency

but, in its lower forms, is the condition of life.

So a human being if he is to exist has got to be moral at least with regard to certain things. When knowledge increases and civilization advances men consciously reflect on the consequences of their actions and a code of morality is evolved. Moral injunctions differ in different parts of the world depending on the development, knowledge and experience of the particular peoples. Though we find that most of the modes of behaviour imposed on men and women in the past are incorrect and even harmful they were imposed with the belief that they were necessary to the welfare of the individual, group or community.

It is said that all religions teach people to be virtuous, to be honest, truthful, etc., and that no religion preaches murder. The plain fact is that it dare not. If any religion preaches anti-social qualities the society it dominates will disappear or its teachings will be accepted only in a modified form.

Morality is the outcome of social evolution. The fact that morality varies with time, place and circumstance proves that it is not something divinely given. Moral ideas like our intellectual concepts are constantly undergoing revision—adaptation to changing conditions. Morality is concerned with man's relation to man, not to God.

The morality of religion is a system of restraints. Instead of teaching that right thinking and right acting are necessary conditions of a full and happy life we are taught that we must refrain from certain acts because they are displeasing to God. History has shown the utter inadequacy, to put it mildly, of such teaching.

Moral and intellectual progress has coincided with the growth of scepticism. Rationalism encourages scepticism, right-thinking and right action which are indispensable to the development of character.

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## Notes & News.

**O**N 2nd January our editor had a very successful evening at the Cosmo Circle, Bandra, where he spoke on "Belief in Reason" to an informal gathering of the members of that Circle. The questions and discussion that followed, showed a sincere desire on the part of the speakers to understand the rationalist viewpoint.

**W**E learn that the Cosmo Circle is coming up against opposition from orthodox circles in Bandra because of its progressive tendencies. One has nothing to fear from open opposition which always strengthens rather than weakens a progressive movement but the opposition that one generally gets from religious orthodoxy is of a different kind. The Cosmo Circle which caters to the social and intellectual needs of young men and women in Bandra should receive the full and unstinted support of progressive-minded persons. We wish the energetic workers of the Circle every success.

**P**ROF. R. D. Karve was one of the speakers in the series of public lectures on the "New World Order", arranged by the Cosmo Circle, a further announcement of which appears elsewhere in this issue. Prof. Karve spoke on "Rationalism and the New World Order". Prof. A. M. Moulvi presided. There was a large audience and Prof. Karve dealt with the subject in a very able manner. He first explained the rationalist attitude and then stated what he as a rationalist desired and worked for in a New World Order. His exposition was lucid and forceful, and his replies to the questions raised by the speakers who followed were brilliant and convincing. Prof. Moulvi who knew Prof. Karve as a colleague in the Karnatak College twenty-one years ago gave instances to show that Prof. Karve was a man of unbending will, a rationalist to the core and practiced what he preached. He,

however, differed from many ideas expressed by Prof. Karve and gave some views in favour of the belief in God. A summary of the lecture will appear in the next issue.

**T**HE Eleventh Annual Dinner and Reunion of the R. A. I. will be held on the 16th of March at the Taj. Details regarding the same and names of speakers will be announced in the next issue of *Reason*. We request members to make note of the date and make it a point to attend along with their friends.

**K**NOWING that two things cannot occupy the same space at the same time, some people still want to do the impossible and break one another's head if they cannot. Religion, we are told, teaches brotherly love. Experience has proved that it is quite the contrary from numerous communal riots we hear of. But when riots take place between members professing the same religion, the claim that religion inculcates a spirit of brotherliness is simply preposterous. Here is an instance. On the last Idd day, it was reported that at Munshiganj there was a riot between two parties of Muslims. Both the parties happened to select the same spot for sacrificing a cow, as is the custom amongst Muslims to do so on this particular day, *Idul Ziah*, followed by a feast. One party reached the chosen spot and the other party arrived just after, demanding the same place for the same purpose. Mischief was afoot, and God watched on in complacent silence! Perhaps it was because in the old, old times human blood was far more satisfying to Him, and He still has a liking for human sacrifice.

This is how religious fanaticism creates animosity and religious rituals lead to bloodshed. Where religion comes in reason and tolerance are at a discount.

A. HUSEIN.



# GOD AND NATURE

By R. D. KARVE

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WHERE the orthodox man speaks of God, the modern man speaks of Nature as being more in conformity with scientific ideas. But he often speaks of Nature with a capital N and attributes the same qualities to it as are usually attributed to God by the orthodox. Thus he speaks of the intentions of Nature and arrangements made by Nature with a specific purpose and so on, attributing intelligence and will-power and engineering ability to Nature. A little consideration will show, however, that this is perfectly absurd. This absurdity has gone so far that Chamber's Twentieth Century Dictionary defines Nature as "the power which creates and which regulates the material world." After this, one can hardly blame the man in the street for speaking of Nature in that way. The same dictionary gives another definition of the word viz. "the established order of things, the universe." Even "the established order of things" raises the question, "established by whom?", and is, therefore, objectionable since it presupposes a creator. "The universe" will do as a definition of Nature, since this in reality is a word used to denote all that exists, without attributing any qualities to it.

I was very much surprised to read in the *Rationalists Annual*\* an article by Sir Arthur Keith in which he speaks of the mechanism by which Nature works out its evolutionary purpose. It is hardly permissible for a scientist to speak of Nature as if it was a synonym of God. No wonder if lesser lights make the same blunder. In a recent debate on birth-control, Dr. Alban DeSouza quoted an eminent surgeon as saying that the perfect contraceptive had

not only not yet been found, but that it would be impossible to find it, because Nature would oppose tooth and nail any interference with its intention of unlimited multiplication. The good doctor is a Catholic and he brought in Nature because a previous speaker had predicted that he would use the religious argument and he therefore preferred to speak of Nature rather than God. To speak of Nature in this way is either camouflage or ignorance. It is much more sensible to speak of God if one wants to speak of creation and the intelligence and benevolence behind it and the mechanism by means of which evolution is brought about.

This reminds me of a recent case in America, when two doctors and a nurse in charge of a Maternity Health Centre in Waterbury (Connecticut) were prosecuted for violating the law by giving contraceptive advice to a married woman on medical grounds and the latter was also prosecuted for following that advice. The doctors had done it in good faith, believing that they had the right to give such advice on medical grounds, and so they were ultimately let off with a warning, but the legal interpretations of the law which dated from 1879 are interesting. The lower court acquitted them, but the higher court declared that several attempts made to change that law so as to allow doctors to give such advice having failed, it was beyond the power of courts to exempt doctors even if they gave the advice on medical grounds. A funny point was raised on behalf of the accused, whose pleader asked the court that as certain days in a month were believed to be free from the danger of concep-

\* *Rationalists Annual* 1941 (Watts 1s.)

tion, would a calendar indicating these days be considered a contraceptive device? To this the court said "No". The reader may wonder what this has to do with God and Nature. The point is that this prosecution was undertaken at the instigation of an institution of Roman Catholic priests, who declared that birth-control was immoral according to the Catholic church because it was *unnatural*. Since even Roman Catholic priests do not go about in a state of nature and live in houses which are quite as unnatural as their clothes and almost every other convenience of modern life of which they take full advantage, why should birth-control alone be condemned on that ground? They could easily have declared that God was against it, but even Roman Catholic priests are afraid to parade their intimate acquaintance with God now-a-days. That is as it should be, but the argument they gave in lieu of that was still more ridiculous.

The same confusion of thought which makes people speak of Nature as if that word was a synonym of God, is responsible for the warning often given by moralists against breaking the laws of Nature. The laws of nature are not like the Commandments of God. It seems it is easy for us to break these Commandments in spite of the Omnipotence of God, but the laws of nature are such that nobody can break them. The warning not to break them is therefore futile. Nature never tells you to do or not to do this or that, as God is supposed to do. The laws of nature are always hypothetical truths. If you do this, the consequence will be that, and it is a necessary consequence. God is supposed to have given orders to some individuals by revelation but nature gives no such orders. The knowledge of the laws of nature has been obtained by man by observation and experiment. Religious people pretend that these laws are revealed to man when God thinks fit, but it is to be remarked that they are never revealed to a

Pope or other religious head, but always to scientists, who have often to work hard for the knowledge, whatever their views on religion may be, and it is to be noted that the majority of scientists are atheists. Would they have obtained the knowledge if God had anything to do with it?

That some kind of law and order is found in the universe is very often given as an argument in favour of the existence of God. Really speaking, it is nothing of the kind. In fact, some kind of order is inevitable and it is impossible even to imagine a state of things in which there is no order, in which, for instance, hydrogen and oxygen combined in certain proportions will sometimes form water and sometimes milk. There is nothing surprising in the existence of order. Bertrand Russell has given a mathematical explanation of the necessity of order. Everybody knows that any three points in space must not only lie in a plane, but that they must also lie on a circle, or in other words, that a circle can be drawn through any three given points. Students of mathematics also know that a parabola can be drawn through any four given points in a plane and a hyperbola through any five points. Now it is perfectly obvious that however powerful a god may be imagined to be, he cannot arrange three points in such a way that a circle cannot be drawn through them. The kind of order seen here is obviously inevitable. I have often asked orthodox people the question whether God with all his Omnipotence could make a piece of paper have the shape of a square and a circle at the same time. Orthodox people naturally say that this is physically impossible and that is why even God cannot do it. The order which we find in the world is of that kind. It is there because nothing else is possible. So the fact that there is order in the world need not trouble the atheist at all. The order need not be put there by God or Nature with a capital N. It is there because

(Continued on page 46)

# A Common Misconception About Mind

By C. L. D'AVOINE.

THE New Book Co., Hornby Road, Bombay, are good enough to send me regularly their catalogue of the best publications they recommend. Their latest, that of December 1940, contains also a review of some books by Marion Pickett. One of the books reviewed by that person is "Mind in Transition" by Prof. Joseph K. Hart which, from her description of the same, appears to me to be one of those books on mind which is dealt with in the proper scientific manner. Books on Mind were, till recently, generally written by people without proper scientific training to deal with such a difficult subject and they were therefore full of mystical ideas about mind which most of these writers took to be an entity independent of the body.

Marion Pickett, who, I presume, is a lady, seems to belong to that school which takes a mystical view of mind. She says that she disagrees with Prof. Hart when he says that man has inherited his mind from his animal ancestors, namely, those ape-like animals who lived millions of years ago.

"I do not think," she says, "that animals have "Mind" but only a brain which responds to the need of the flesh, whereas the mind of Man inspires him with the love of beauty, of all the arts and with desire to go forward and not to remain static which seem to satisfy the ape." Despite this disagreement with Prof. Hart, Marion Pickett reviews Prof. Hart's book in a sympathetic manner and actually recommends it.

She seems to agree with Prof. Hart who says that a new world is impossible after this war unless the new world understands the mystery of man better than the old.

How is this possible unless the study of the Mind of Man proceeds along the line of its evolution from the lower animals? Marion Pickett appears to recognize that there is still a good deal of the animal brutality in Man and

yet she disagrees that the mind of Man is inherited from animal ancestors!

She takes the mind of a highly cultured civilized and intelligent individual and compares the same with that of the ape. This is not the way to study the evolution of mind and small wonder she falls into the common misconception on the question.

She says that she is certain that the mind of man is not derived from the ape because she appears to believe the Story of Genesis about the creation of man though she naively professes not to take that story literally. This explains her reluctance to accept the scientific findings that the mind of man is derived from the lower animals. Religion has created that prejudice and doubtless with people who have swallowed that Biblical story, that prejudice is deep-seated.

"Without taking Genesis literally," she says, "it is not difficult to believe that the Creator—no matter in what form we visualise him—breathed into man a "soul" and left in him that spark of God which makes him different to the animals, but I would not go so far as to say that all men possess souls."

It is rather amusing to be told that it matters not how we visualize the Creator. Yes, indeed, one is curious to know what is the form of that Creator who breathed a soul into man. Surely he must have a mouth to breathe and having a mouth he must also have a face, a head and the rest of the body. Does not the picture of an old, bearded man, dressed in blue and living in the clouds suit him well? Marion Pickett must have had such a picture in mind when she tells us that it is not difficult to believe that such a Creator breathed a soul into man.

Marion Pickett tries to be facetious when she says that she does not believe that that Creator gave all men souls. That would have

been a very invidious act on the part of the Creator, but she says this just to hint that Hitler has no soul and does not believe in God, hence the fearful war we are having. Whether Hitler and his associates have souls or not, it is certain that Hitler believes in God. He affirmed this in his Munich speech in February 1940 when he said that he believed in God and he was sure that God would not let the German people down.

It is clear that Marion Pickett is rather confused about her idea of the Creator, the soul, mind or spirit. One would have left it at that and passed on. Unfortunately, she makes a serious allegation likely to mislead the uninformed and this must not be allowed to go unchallenged.

She says, "Professor Hart may be right in his theory that it is because the "mind" of man is trammelled with the pattern of the ape that he brings about disasters, such as we are facing today."

"Unfortunately", she continues, "Scientists refuse to accept a theory which cannot be supported by scientific fact, and this in my opinion has been a deterrent in the understanding of man. Scientists for years denied the existence of man's soul or spirit or mind whichever one may be pleased to call it, but to-day many admit that they are constantly coming up against something which cannot be explained by scientific facts, and to which no formula can be applied. Some call it the fourth entity which may as time passes give to the world a better understanding of Man."

Marion Pickett is undoubtedly romancing in telling such nonsense. I am sure she will be hard put to it to mention only three biologists of repute who could utter such an absurdity. On the contrary, most authorities, who are competent to speak on the subject, assure us that mind is not an independent entity as the mystics would have it. The brain, they say, is the organ of mind and to understand mind one must study its evolution from the lower animals upward. Marion Pickett, who seems to be

repeating what the Fundamentalists are fond of saying when they are out to deny the theory of evolution, would do well to read what Professor James Harvey Robinson, an acknowledged authority on Mind, says in his book: "The Mind in the Making"

"There are four historical layers underlying the minds of civilized men—the animal mind, the child mind, the savage mind, and the traditional civilized mind. We are all animals and never can cease to be; we were all children at our most impressionable age and can never get over the effects of that; our human ancestors have lived in savagery during practically the whole existence of the race, say five thousand or a million years, and the primitive mind is ever with us; finally, we are all born into an elaborate civilization, the constant pressure of which we can by no means escape."

"Each of these underlying minds has its special sciences and appropriate literatures. The new discipline of animal or comparative psychology deals with the first; genetic and analytical psychology with the second; anthropology, ethnology and comparative religion with the third; and the history of philosophy, science, theology, and literature with the fourth."

"We may grow beyond these underlying minds and in the light of new knowledge we may criticize their findings and even persuade ourselves that we have successfully transcended them. But if we are fair with ourselves we shall find that their hold on us is really inexorable. We can only transcend them artificially and precariously in certain highly favourable conditions. Depression, anger, fear or ordinary irritation will speedily prove the insecurity of any artificial structure that we manage to rear on our four-fold foundation. Such fundamental and vital preoccupations as religion, love, war, and the chase stir impulses that lie far back in human history and which effectually repudiate the cavillings of ratiocination."

"It is now generally conceded by all who have studied the varied evidence, and have

freed themselves from ancient prejudice, that if we traced back our human lineage far enough we should come to a point where our human ancestors had no civilization and lived a speechless, naked, houseless, fireless and toolless life, similar to that of the existing primates with which we are zoologically closely connected."

"This is one of the most fully substantiated of historical facts and one which we can never neglect in our attempt to explain man as he now is. We are furthermore still animals with not only an animal body but with an animal mind. And this animal body and animal mind are the original foundations on which even the most subtle and refined intellectual life must perforce rest."

"We are ready to classify certain of our most essential desires as brutish—hunger and thirst, the urgency of sleep, and especially sexual longing. We know of blind animal rage, of striking, biting, scratching, howling, snarling, of irrational fears and ignominious flight. We share our senses with the higher animals; have ears, eyes, noses and tongues much like theirs; heart, lungs, and other viscera, and four limbs. They have brains which stand them in good stead, although their heads are not so good as ours. But when one speaks of the animal mind he should think of still other resemblances between the brute and man."

The idea that animals have brain and no mind and that the gulf which separates man from the higher animals is unbridgeable is still taught in Seminaries. Of late, certain theologians, (some Jesuits among them) who find the verdict for the evolution of man to be unquestionable, advance the theory that man is certainly descended from the lower animals but at certain stage of his evolution God breathed a soul into him. When that took place they leave one to conjecture. Marion Pickett, however, believes that the soul was breathed into man at the Creation. She is, therefore, no believer in Evolution and is still in the religious classroom.

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## Rev. PALMER AND ATHEISM.

Says the Very Rev. W. A. Palmer, Dean of Johannesburg, S. Africa (vide Rand Daily Mail, Sep. 23rd.) speaking on the breakdown of all that is finest in Christian civilisation:

"Over and against these conditions are the multitudes that seem to live without any thought of God. They are not Atheists, *for they have not given any thought to the matter.* There is just no sense that anything is missing in life. Just as such people can live without music or art, so they are content to live a life which leaves religion and God out of mind."

That's just it, Mr. Dean, they are not Atheists just because they have not come into touch with a freethinking active body. An inquiring Rationalist would get from them the fact that they were Catholic or Protestant, and would look staggered if asked if they were Trinitarians or Unitarians. Ask such people to buy a car or a horse, they would never accept the seller's word, but would inspect and criticize it from A. to Z. But religion is a different matter. They do not have to buy it, in fact, it is forced upon them as "tiny tots," with the result they can never *"give any thought to the matter"* unless they happen to hear a friend or fellow-passenger discuss it in some form or another. Rationalist books and pamphlets must be of the simplest, primary kind, cheaply sold and short in bulk. For instance, they would sooner accept, or pick up Ingersoll's "Mistakes of Moses" at twopence, than they would accept or pick up his "Reply to Cardinal Manning". A recent issue from the Psychic Press, of "Bible Blunders" (sixpence) would and should make them inquisitive. And beyond the Dean's indifferent multitudes, are those that I class as the "dumb-dest of the dumb". They can read their bible and not see a mistake or fault in it. They have a "thus far, and no further brain", in fact, their case is pathological, they have the "bible-class" mind.

Australia.

S. W. WILLATTS,

## UNRELIABILITY OF ASTROLOGY.

### I

#### Statistical test goes against astrological laws.

1. Prof. Farnsworth of Stanford University Ca., after examining about fifteen hundred persons from Key's Musicians, 'Who is Who' found that "the data give no support to astrological claims so far as they relate to the aesthetic aspect of Character and Personality."

2. Dr. Stokely of the Fels Planetarium says that an American friend of his carried out a statistical test on 22 thousand persons included in the year Book of American Men of Science and found that the *aspects associated with the 'best minds' were not found to answer the test.*

### II

#### Prediction of particular events Charlatanism.

Ptolemy, the famous astrologer of ancient times, says, "It is not possible that particular forms of events could be declared by any astrologer, however scientific. Those only who are inspired by the Deity can predict particular events."

The British Journal of Astrology has been repeating for several months the dictum that "Astrology is a science of warning. They who contended that it is anything more than this are either charlatans or humbugs."

Will believers in Astrology note the above and cease to rely too much on it?

R. J. GOKHALE.

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# CO-EDUCATION

## A ROAD TO NATIONAL UNITY

By ATIB USMANI

**A**LTHOUGH nationalism is proving a curse in all European countries in the form of war, and such great thinkers of our time as Prof. Albert Einstein and Mr. Herbert George Wells regard it as an evil, nevertheless, I look upon it as a necessary stage in the development of all countries towards that sublime ideal of a Modern World-State, to bring about which should be the desire of every educated and intelligent human being all over the world. Nationalism conceived as a milestone in the dynamic process of the formation of universal brotherhood of man is certainly no evil, but when it becomes an end in itself and thus engenders mutual jealousies between neighbouring countries culminating in warfare, it falls into the category of all evils. It is as a transitory phase only, that I think of nationalism with respect to our country India—an object to be achieved but to be outgrown as we pass on to an ever expanding selflessness.

Today India is divided against itself. Even the most casual observer cannot fail to notice the forces that are tending to divide our country into ever narrowing interests. Such silly schemes as Pakistan, conceived by that demigod of Muslim Leaguers, Mr. Jinnah, the illusion of the revival of the ancient Hindu Culture entertained by that father of the Hindu Mahasabha, Pandit Malaviya, the ever-widening gulf between the followers of Socialism and Gandhism in the body of the Congress, the futile dispute over improvising an abortive Hindustani language, and such minority brands as Christians, Sikhs, Parsis, Quadianis and what-nots, each clamouring for its own separate existence, are forces tending to disintegrate India instead of unifying it as a single nation. India is not a nation in the real sense. To raise itself to the

level of internationalism, it must first attain a really national status. Its condition has become so precarious internally that it can neither preserve its own identity if it happens to be drawn into the vortex of the present world war, nor can it join hands with other nations in the effort for the formation of a Modern World-State in which these nations will be required to participate in the not very distant future. In the face of these circumstances one of the speediest, most powerful and thoroughly effective means to unify India is co-education.

In the ensuing paragraphs I shall proceed to show what is meant by co-education; what are its material and psychological advantages; how it should be incorporated in our educational institutions; and the possibility of making India a true nation by transcending with its help all social and religious differences that now exist.

First of all I want to tell our college students that what they are familiar with as co-education in our institutions is not co-education at all. Co-education as we know in our colleges and universities is only a foolish pretence, a ceremonial nonsense that cannot serve any useful purpose. It leaves us where we are, if not the worse for it. When in a lecture room two or three solitary feminine figures are seen seated on a bench specially allotted to them and the boys sit as far removed from them and as closely crowded as possible with the professor's ever watchful eye on them, we believe we are having co-education. If instead of eradicating sex obsessions from the minds of young men and women, fresh restrictions and new forms of censorship have constantly to be imposed by our college authorities to keep a few girls in a predominantly masculine institution, the purpose of co-education is clearly defeated.

This is what is happening in our colleges to-day. And instead of producing emotionally healthy young men and women, they are manufacturing an increasing number gentlemen-at-large and women touch-me-nots every year. What happens in our colleges every day when a set of girls comes across a set of boys around the corner of the college building? The situation is at once comic and pathetic. The girls immediately stop talking and laughing and become serious, the modest casting their eyes downwards, the careful looking sideways, and the haughty ones fixing their eyes directly at infinity—in a word, all are transformed from the human beings they were a moment ago into Sphinxes of modesty. The boys at once brace up, each readjusting his collar and tie and drawing up his trousers to a position in which it would never stay long; and as they approach them, those who belong to our gentlemen-at-large class openly pass objectionable remarks and make gestures at them, those of less daring natures content themselves with a vicious look or smile, and some occasional romantic fellow, if he happens to be with them, gives a wistful, appealing glance to the lady who never condescends to notice it. If on certain rare occasions boys are allowed a certain degree of liberty with their fellow girl-students they approach them with ulterior motives in their hearts and behave in a way most annoying to them.\* The vicious circle goes on, making the boys ever more sneaking and calculating fellows, and the girls morbidly modest and defiant. How are we to remedy this state of affairs? The answer lies in early co-education.

The co-education should begin in schools instead of colleges. Boys and girls should be first brought together when they are still below the age of adolescence. There should be no segregation in seating them, so that they may sit as they please, irrespective of sex. The same thing should be adopted in all the school functions, games and other activities. While

it is essential that every form of religious instruction should be absolutely abolished in the interest of the growth of cosmopolitan ideas, it is imperative that a knowledge of rational ethics should be imparted to them. And as they grow up they should be gradually made familiar with the facts of sex and reproduction according to their age and intelligence.

When boys and girls shall grow up to be young men and women in such an environment they shall be healthier mentally as well as physically, and shall be free from all those traits that mark our gentlemen-at-large and women touch-me-nots. Moreover, they will possess a wider outlook on life than ever found among the products of our institutions. It is now a well established fact that a healthy mind is as necessary for a healthy body as a healthy body is necessary for healthy mind, and the one cannot exist apart from the other. The most eminent psychologists of our time, Freud and Jung, are in agreement as to the reciprocal influence of body and mind. Here it needs be explained as to what exactly is meant by a healthy body and a healthy mind. It is a mistake to suppose that physical health means simply freedom from disease. Nothing can help to form a better idea of physical health than a copy of one of the two well-known geographical magazines which often give pictures of white men as well as dark and black men of those countries where there is no segregation of the sexes. In India such bodies are rare. As regards the question of mental health I shall discuss it at length below.

It is an accepted fact that India is distinguished for the extreme religiousness and asceticism of its people. No other country in the world can compare with it in this respect. Now these very "virtues" are the evidence of its people's mental ill-health. The key to the problem lies in the practice of the most rigorous forms of censorship imposed on the freedom of young men and women by our elders, who look ask-

\*This is true as far as the writer's observation goes but he cannot claim that this is always so.



ance even at the perfectly innocent association of boys and girls who are still of tender age. How this is brought about would be clear from what follows. At this place I shall prefer to give a gist of the findings of world authorities like Havelock Ellis, Bertrand Russell and Judge Lindsey, rather than my own notions on the subject. They have found that when boys and girls are segregated a conflict ensues in their minds between the ideas of conventional morality forced upon them by their elders and their own natural emotions. As they pass on from the age of childhood through adolescence to maturity the conflict grows in depth and intensity and retires into the unconscious mind. But it seldom succeeds in becoming wholly unconscious and finds various expressions in men and women of which extreme religiousness, asceticism, and the moral persecution of others, are the best camouflaged and most prevalent forms. Religious practices and physical self-torture are employed to produce a sort of emotional anaesthesia in the individual to maintain which a considerable part of physical and mental energy is dissipated. Thus the victims of the unconscious repressions of their natural emotions not only keep on wasting their energies which might otherwise have been usefully employed, but they also become a positive menace to the society in their direct or indirect influence. They assume a moral guardianship of every body and heavily censor and persecute those rare, fortunate, free souls who happen to be in their circle. Social circles in India consist of a large majority of mentally morbid grown-ups who are constantly wasting their energies and a major part of their life in outvying one another in making life unbearable for the younger generation. More often than not this results in converting the younger people into the same kind of mentally unhealthy persons who in their turn begin to persecute their young. Hence it becomes obvious that the secret of the division of our

country lies in the personalities of its people that are divided against themselves.

The fact that the segregation of the sexes is the chief cause of mental ill-health of the people of our country brings us directly to the importance of co-education. In the co-educational institutions there is no possibility of this cause coming into operation. Therefore when boys and girls receiving education in such institutions will grow up into men and women they would make for better citizens in every respect. And it is in such healthy material that we can place our hope of making India a true nation. It is often complained by our well-meaning but uninformed elders that the educated young people of this country are too dispondent and unambitious. They say, "you people are such idlers you don't want to do anything; look at the people of western countries, how progressive they are." That is perfectly true. But, perhaps they do not know that the most powerful incentive comes from the proximity of the opposite sex which is denied to them. It goes without saying that boys work better and play better when the girls are present, and *vice versa*. Let the separate institutions of boys and girls be abolished and co-educational institutions formed and the despondency and unambitiousness will disappear once for ever from the young people of our country. One great advantage of early co-education would be that young men and women shall fall in love and marry irrespective of the castes, communities or religions to which they belong. Thus a real amalgamation would ensue and all forms of social and religious differences would automatically vanish.

Our moralists and religionists would rise up in awe and indignation at this suggestion and cry. "What! Shall we sacrifice the morals of our young men and women and our religions for the sake of national unity and freedom?" First of all let them know that no sacrifice is too great for the betterment of our country. Secondly, they should rest

assured that so far as the question of morals goes there is hardly any likelihood of corruption, because, as I have already mentioned, sexology and rational ethics will be taught in co-educational institutions. Wherever co-education has been tried together with a sound knowledge of sexology and rational ethics the evidence is in favour of this view. Moreover, it should be remembered that the danger does not lie in sound knowledge but in the half-baked ideas gleaned through devious ways—normally people err because of the want of knowledge and not in spite of it. And as for the question of the disappearance of religions, the sooner they disappear the better for us. I know that their respective religions are dear to those who were born in them, although there are many exceptions; but have they ever paused to reflect what after all is the significance of any religion when viewed in a proper space-and-time perspective. Scientists have shown that the drama of life has just begun—we are only four hundred generations away from the primordial man—and the period in the earth's age favourable to human life and achievements that lies in future, is so immeasurably greater than that which has already passed, that the most impregnable shapes of today would have gone and their places taken by shapes yet undreamed of. Then, who but a fool can say that the known religions to which we so unreasonably and tenaciously cling today would survive such a colossal change? To lament for the sacrifice of such transitory things as these religions that bar our way to national unity and freedom is childish vanity. The things that are here and before us, and the things that have been and are no more, will be nothing in comparison with the things to come.

[The present code of morality is based on the fundamentally wrong assumption that all sex expression is sin. Getting rid of this false notion will make for a saner and more rational society.—*Ed.*]

## GOD AND NATURE

(Concluded from page 38.)

absence of that order is a physical impossibility and utter chaos cannot even be imagined.

This disposes of the most important argument in favour of the existence of God and proves at the same time the absurdity of thinking of Nature as having made certain laws which it is desirable to obey and as having certain intentions from which it cannot be turned. Man has in fact turned the laws of nature to his own use and can behave as he pleases if he is prepared to take the consequences. The laws of nature cannot be broken. They do not constitute a penal code involving punishment if they are broken. Scientists are, therefore, taking a dislike to the word "laws" in this connection because it leads to the kind of confusion just pointed out. They are inevitable sequences rather than laws and it would be desirable to find a new word for them.

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AND

**Dr. C. L. D'Avoine, M. D.,**  
*President, Rationalist Association of India.*

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# Rationalism in India

**I**N a conservative country like India where religion permeates the everyday life of the people, where supernaturalism and superstitious practices have taken such deep roots in the mentality of the people, where emotionalism plays such a prominent part, it will be a very uphill task and require all our energies and resources to spread the light of Reason.

Mr. F. J. Gould in his concise *History of Religion* says, "Thus early (from the times of the Vedas) did the Hindu mind manifest its taste for subtle reflection and deep religious dreams, intent rather on abstractions and subtleties than on the outer practical sphere of life and experience. The sultry climate of India predisposes the mind to self-communion and reverie." Because of such mental make-up of the Hindus that Brahminism was able to oust the pure ethical and practical religion of Buddha from India, and charlatans like Madame Blavatsky, Mrs. Anne Besant &c. were able to secure a very large following. Even highly educated and cultured men threw their reasoning faculty to the winds and succumbed to the blandishments of these people. I remember the late Mr. Subramanean Iyer, an eminent lawyer and High Court Judge of Madras, once saying that famines in India were due to people not properly performing Shraddha ceremonies.

Mr. Gandhi who is a good judge of human nature and knows how to play on men's emotion, has, apart from his unique and hypnotising personality, succeeded in acquiring such a domineering influence on his fellow-countrymen, chiefly his co-religionists, by simply assuming the role of an ascetic, (asceticism and practice of austerities being held in high esteem by the Hindus) and as a man of God like the Hebrew prophets of old, and thus playing on their religious emotions. It is no wonder that he is hailed as a Mahatma. He told the people of Bihar that the earthquake was sent by God as a visitation of His wrath for their sins! I wonder if he himself believes this!

When an obscurantist like Mr. Gandhi manages to wield such an immense influence on the minds of his fellowmen, what chance is there for Rationalism to make any headway in India.

Such an advanced community as that of the Parsees is intolerant and bigoted where religious matters are concerned. Look at the

fuss they made when certain refined Parsee men and women wanted to start a burial ground in Poona, though in the mofussil where there are no Towers of Silence, the Parsee bury their dead. My own two daughters are buried in Madras. They are under the thumb of their priests, spend large amount of money on silly and superstitious funeral ceremonies without understanding the why and wherefore of such ceremonies, even priests do not understand and those who do will not enlighten their clients because if they did so and people came to know the real significance of these ceremonies their occupation would be gone. Every year thousands of rupees are, as if it were, burnt into smoke in shape of sandal wood offered to the holy fire in the fire-temple.

The present system of education is very much to blame for this state of affairs. No attempt is made to develop the reasoning faculty of the child. He is not taught to think for himself and form his own opinions. The result is that when he grows up into manhood he finds it difficult to get rid of whatever beliefs are inculcated in him during his childhood by his teachers, priests and parents. It is no wonder then that our Association has not yet made much headway, during its seven years' existence. Compare this poor result with that of the R. P. A. It had only 94 members and other subscribers in 1899. In 1906 this number rose to 1135 and in 1936 to 4376. It has received legacies to a total of £66,349 between the years 1908 and 1936. The Indians have yet much to learn from Englishmen. We talk, they act.

We not only want more members but also a large fund to enable us to institute lectures on rationalism, to print and distribute leaflets, conveying the message of freethought, chiefly to the student population.

Unless each and every member of the Association takes a keen interest in its welfare, not only by securing members but also by subscribing their mite to the Reserve Fund and in other ways, the result will be disappointing.

K. C. SANJANA.

(From a letter dated 15-11-37 to Mr. Abraham Solomon, from the late Lt.-Col. K. C. Sanjana of Poona.)

## OBITUARIES.

**Gulamali C. Moolji, 1876-1940.**

It is with the deepest regret we record the sudden death of Mr. Gulamali C. Moolji who died of heart failure on December 31, 1940, at the age of 64. He was the oldest senior legal practitioner in the Small Causes Court having started practising in 1905. He was a keen and active rationalist and was very popular with the younger generation. Well versed in the Islamic religion and liturgy, there are few even among the moolvies and priests who could stand up to him. He was connected with and helped many charitable and educational institutions. He was one of the oldest and staunchest members of the R. A. I. and regularly attended all its functions. He helped to spread the rationalist outlook in every possible way. In him we have lost a valued friend and a keen rationalist. We offer our deepest sympathies to his bereaved family.

A. S.

**Lt.-Col. K. C. Sanjana, 1853-1941,**

Lt. Col. K. C. Sanjana, I.M.S. (retired) of Poona died on January 13, 1941 at the age of 88. He was a staunch rationalist of over 40 years standing, a member of the Rationalist Press Association since 1908, and of the R. A. I. since 1931, of which he became a life member in March 1940. He helped our Association constantly and whenever it needed help.

In his death the R. A. I. has lost a very keen and valued member.

We offer our deepest sympathies to his bereaved family.

A. S.

## NOTICE.

The next copy of *Reason* will be sent by V.P.P. to those who have not yet sent in their subscriptions.

We regret the last issue contained several typographical mistakes due to difficulties in the press and it being brought out in a hurry.

"Reason" will be out on the 10th of each month and will reach readers on the 13th. Due to a tightening of postal regulations, we are unable to post copies on any other day. Readers are, therefore, requested to inform us before 10th of each month if they require extra copies.

EDITOR,

## THE COSMO CIRCLE LECTURES.

*Sunday, 2nd February, 5 p. m.*

**Science and the New World Order**

*Speaker: CLIFFORD MANSHARDT.*

*Sunday, 16th February, 5 p. m.*

**Philosophy and the New  
World Order**

*Speaker: PROF. J. ANDRADE.*

*Sunday, 23rd February, 5 p. m.*

**Some Implications of the  
New World Order**

*Speaker: PROF. P. A. WADIA.*

*Sunday, 2nd March, 5 p. m.*

**Economics and the New  
World Order**

*Speaker: PROF. J. J. ANJARIA.*

## 1941 CENSUS.

The attention of Freethinkers is drawn to the fact that they may insist on entering "Atheist," "Agnostic" or "Rationalist" in the column for "Religion," in the 1941 census, to be taken on 1st March.

The instructions given by the authorities to enumerators as regards question 4 in the Census Form, which pertains to Religion are as follows:

"This question is for the *personal, individual* religion, professed by each person. Ask him what it is and *record the answer as given*. Examples are Hindu, Islam, Sikh, Jain, Buddhist, Christian, Brahmo, *Agnostic*, Confucian, etc." (Italics ours.)

We hope Freethinkers will make it a point to exercise their right. Any difficulty experienced should be reported to the Chief Census Officer.

If there is anything of value, it is liberty.  
Liberty is the air of the soul, the sunshine of  
life. Without it the world is a prison, and the  
Universe is an infinite dungeon.

—Ingersoll.

# REASON

Vol. IX

MARCH 1941

No. 3

The Journal of the Rationalist Association of India

5-12, Queen's Road, Bombay.

(ESTD. 1931)

Editor:

Abraham Solomon

*The writers of the articles in this journal are themselves responsible for the views expressed and do not implicate the Rationalist Association of India in any way.*

*All contributions, correspondence, press cuttings, Journals in exchange, enquiries regarding advertisement rates, etc., should be addressed to Mr. Abraham Solomon, Editor, "REASON," 59, Kurmani Building, Arthur Road, Bombay 11.*

*We invite contributions of not more than 2,000 words on topics of interest to rationalists. They should be type-written. If not published they will not be returned unless stamps are enclosed.*

*R. A. I. Membership Rs. 5/- Foreign 8s. annually which includes "Reason".*

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Reason gains all men by compelling none.

— Aaron Hill.

ON the 16th of this month the Rationalist Association of India holds its Eleventh Annual Dinner and Reunion. One is inclined to pause a little and reflect on the circumstances in which we find ourselves. In spite of the difficult times the past year has been one of slow but steady progress. *Reason* continues to have a larger circulation and through it the message of rationalism reaches a wider area than formerly. Rationalist groups are springing up in different places and the R. A. I. must serve to coordinate their activities.

Rationalists in India must fully realize the task before them and attack with greater vigour the obstacle which impede the progress of rationalism in this country. Some of the causes for the slow progress of rationalism in this country have been dealt with by Mr. A. R. Desai elsewhere in this issue. There are other causes also and if rationalism is to make any headway they need the urgent attention of all those who are active workers in the cause of enlightenment and progress.

The first and foremost thing to be done is to

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increase the membership of the R. A. I. which is the only freethought organisation in this country and make it a powerful organisation to combat the forces of organised religion and ignorance.

There are many things that are likely to discourage a rationalist worker. One of them is that many who have discarded all belief in religion take no interest in the cause of rationalism. Having emancipated themselves they do nothing for the emancipation of others.

There are others who say that to oppose religion is to take it too seriously to give it an importance it does not deserve. They have outgrown religion so far that they are no longer interested in the subject from any point of view. These people are usually well off and are able to evade the disabilities that the middle and poorer class of rationalist has to face.

There are yet others who play for safety. As a friend of mine once said, "Though their intellect elevates them to the skies of freethought, their stomach keeps them down in the bog of ignorant superstition." One cannot blame them much because circumstances compel them to be this way. All the same, I think this should make them fight with greater vigour against that which demands this hypocrisy on their part, so that their example may help others to face the coercive activities of organised religion with greater courage.

At any rate it is quite clear that there are many freethinkers who are not associated with our work and also many who have not even heard of the R. A. I. or our journal *Reason*. The task of reaching these freethinkers lies with our members.

Freethought in this country is still in its infancy, and the task before us is a colossal one. Still we forge ahead, with our heads high, triumphant and unbeaten, convinced of the fact that only when man discards his primitive beliefs and learns to put greater confidence in his own ability to achieve greater happiness in this

world, will he pass to higher and higher climes of advancement and progress.

The policeman who tackles armed burglars with no weapon but his staff, the fireman who forges his way through heat and smoke to save women and children, the lifeboat men who row through darkness and storm to rescue the shipwrecked, the unknown thousands whose lives are a daily sacrifice for beloved ones, the sufferers who hide their pain to spare relatives and friends, the martyrs of unpopular causes who face odium, obloquy, poverty, imprisonment, and sometimes death for their convictions—these display "the heroism of man," and though they talk very little about "faith" and "sanctification" and the "Eternal," attract no public attention like the heroes of battlefields, and have no statues in Trafalgar Square, they sweeten in silence and obscurity the life-blood of our race.

—*The Freethinker*, October 21, 1888.

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## Notes & News.

**T**HERE is just time to remind members of the Eleventh Annual General Meeting and Dinner to be held at the Taj on the 16th inst. An announcement regarding the same appears on the second cover page of this issue. Those who wish to attend and have not yet informed the Secretaries should do so immediately stating the number of guests they wish to bring with them. We expect the attendance to be larger than the one we had last year.

**M**EMBERS will be pleased to know that Miss Shakuntala Paranjpye is the guest of honour and the principal speaker for the evening. Prof. H. V. Hampton and Prof. S. K. Muranjan have also kindly consented to speak.

**W**E are passing through trying times which promise to become more trying in the near future, and an enjoyable evening in the company of rationalists should not be missed. Our religious friends take pains to assure us that all rationalists are doomed to pass eternity in a certain place, so since we are all to be together, why not start getting used to it? We hasten to assure readers that the climatic conditions in the Princes' Chamber at the Taj will certainly be more pleasant than are supposed to exist in the place referred to by our worthy friends.

**W**E welcome the formation of the *Rationalist Club* at Santa Cruz (Suburb of Bombay) which held its first lecture on Sunday, 24th Feb. Prof. R. D. Karve spoke on "What is Rationalism?" to a large and interested audience. He expounded the subject in his usual able manner and emphasised the necessity of subjecting all problems of life to correct and logical reasoning. He effectively showed that the belief in God, soul and the

life hereafter, had arisen due to incorrect reasoning and false assumptions. And that most of these beliefs when subjected to critical analysis and when seen in the light of present day knowledge, are absurd and ridiculous.

**T**HE Rationalist Club also draws its members from places around Santa Cruz and consists of young people who are enthusiastic and keenly interested in the cause of rationalism and social advancement. We learn from its energetic secretaries that they intend to arrange lectures regularly and also conduct study-circles. We wish the energetic workers of the club every success and assure them our co-operation. Those wishing to get in touch should write to the Hon. Secretary, Mr. Kantilal Raval, The Rationalist Club, Mithibai Balal Ashram, Gorebunder Road, Vile Parle.

**I**T is heartening to note that our efforts are receiving recognition from our older members. Mr. Amiruddin S. Tyebji, one of our founder members and formerly one of our vice-presidents, has sent a donation of Rs. 100/- to the R. A. I. Such appreciation goes a great way in encouraging us to pursue our efforts more vigorously for the cause of enlightenment and progress.

**A**DDRESSING the Missionary Students the Pope is reported to have told them that the cause of the present war is due to people no longer believing in God and he exhorted the priests to endeavour to restore that belief. Such a statement from a man, who is the head of an important Church, really makes one smile. To put it plainly, the Pope must be a simpleton to think like this and probably he thinks everybody is a simpleton like himself to make such an absurd statement.

One would like to ask whether there were no wars during the centuries that the belief in God was very strong in Europe and when the Popes

ruled supreme over the hearts of men. History shows that the worst wars on record took place during those times, that religion was the cause of the most destructive wars that ever disturbed the peace of the world.

People no longer believe in God as taught especially by the Catholic Church because education has made such a naive belief untenable. To ask his missionaries to endeavour to restore this belief is exactly like asking Nursery Maids to restore the belief in bogey man in grown up children.

x                      x                      x

**A** DOCTOR tells me of the religious customs of some Hindus which are really surprising if not shocking. It is the case of a boy aged 3 years who was recovering from a very serious illness. The child had become weak and emaciated and was constantly asking for food after his long illness. But his parents would not allow him any food except milk, because they had made a vow to take him to a temple in Southern India where his hair would be cut and a name given him. Not until these ceremonies and pilgrimage are performed, the child could be given any food, however hungry and weak he may be. For want of money the parents are not decided when he will be taken there.

Isn't it the height of religious stupidity? This is how religious bigotry drives people even to the point of killing their dear ones, and even their love for their children is neglected and ignored for the sake of religious humbug.

x                      x                      x

We gratefully acknowledge:—

Amirudin S. Tyebji Rs. 100/-; "Judex" Rs. 5/-; Clement Hurry Rs. 5/-; C. L. D'Avoine Rs. 5/-; Claude D'Avoine Rs. 5/-; S. W. Willatts, Australia, Rs. 5/-; A. Rahim Beg Mirza, Peshawar, Rs. 5/-; I. D'Avoine Rs. 5/-; R. D. Karve Rs. 5/-; Col. K. G. Gharpure, Poona, Rs. 5/-; E. D'Avoine Rs. 5/-; Mrs. P. J. Brandon Brady Rs. 5/-; E. Benjamin Rs. 5/-; R. M. Rs. 5/-; H. R. Desai Re. 1/8.

A. HUSEIN.

Series of talks broadcast from the Bombay Station of the All India Radio on 23rd, 24th, 25th, 26th, 30th & 31st Oct. 1939.

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# Rationalism And The New World Order

(Based on a lecture delivered at the Cosmo Circle, Bandra)

By R. D. Karve

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**A** FAVOURITE charge against rationalists is that they tend to be dogmatic. If that is so, it is the fault of individual rationalists, not of rationalism as such. Rationalism has no dogmas. Even atheism is not a dogma with it. In fact, many rationalists prefer to call themselves agnostics rather than atheists, though personally I think that this is due to a misapprehension of the correct atheistic attitude. When I call myself an atheist, I mean that belief in God is a dogma which I do not accept. It is obviously impossible for a rationalist to define God, in whose very existence he does not believe. It is for believers to give us their idea of God and to define him if possible. Nobody has yet proved the existence of God, nor even given an idea of God that is logically acceptable. There is no reason therefore for me to call myself an agnostic. Nobody can give me sufficient reason to make me admit the possibility that God may perhaps exist. That is why I am an atheist.

One argument frequently given in favour of the existence of God is that some kind of order is found in the world and that that order must be somebody's doing and in that case that somebody may be called God. This is one of the best arguments given, but it is not very sound. The order that is found in the world is there simply because it is inevitable. To take an instance, the mathematical property that a circle can be drawn through any three points in space is inevitably true and one cannot even imagine an omnipotent god finding three points which do not satisfy that property. It is as impossible as to invent a round square for instance. Why then give credit to God for an order which he could not have avoided even

if he wanted to, on the supposition that there is an omnipotent God? All the order that is found in the world is equally inevitable and it is impossible even to imagine a chaos in which a combination of hydrogen and oxygen in a certain fixed proportion will sometimes give water and sometimes milk !

It may perhaps be said that the very insistence of rationalists on reason as the supreme guide to knowledge is in itself a dogma. This can hardly be maintained. Reason is what distinguishes man from other animals and what has given him supremacy in the world. Man is a reasoning animal and even those who do not theoretically accept its supremacy continue to use it in their daily life. Religion itself is derived from attempts at reasoning by primitive men. A child imagines its father to be all-powerful, since he can do a number of things beyond the power of the child and can also thrash the child for going against his wishes. The reverence for the father which is felt even after the child grows up is merely a continuation of this childish sentiment. If the father is so much greater than the son, how much greater must the father's father be ! Going back in this way, one gets the idea of an omnipotent God, and Gandhi has recommended this method for getting a correct idea of god, who is even now called the heavenly Father. This is certainly reasoning, even if it is childish reasoning. Frightened by natural phenomena, primitive man imagined so many different deities corresponding to the powers of nature, the sun, the moon, the sea and so on. Late on, some religions thought it better to concentrate power in one omnipotent being and call him the one and only God, which was not

a very brilliant idea, since the conflicts often seen in the world can be much better explained with a plurality of conflicting gods rather than with one omnipotent God, which forced certain religions to invent a Devil to explain the conflicts, though how the devil can combat omnipotence is a mystery. In any case it can be easily seen that the very idea of God is due to reasoning of sorts. In fact, man is an incorrigible reasoner, even in religious matters, which are usually supposed to be beyond the pale of reason. When a religious man believes that the simple act of uttering the name of God can secure him a place in Heaven, he argues that even if the name is uttered by accident, it should have the same effect, just as fire will burn whether you touch it by design or by accident. Our mythology abounds in stories of this kind. This is scientific reasoning, though based on absurd premises. How then can anybody call reason a dogma?

It is obvious from the above that reasoning may sometimes go wrong, and some people naturally object to its being considered a proper guide. It is a good objection, but the answer is that men is learning to reason better and better, and that in any case we have nothing better than reason to go by. Some people put forward the claims of intuition as against reason and the most modern advocate of intuition was the great French philosopher who died very recently, Henri Bergson. He maintained that reasoning about a thing is like going round it, which gives only superficial knowledge, while intuition enters into the very heart of it and so to say identifies itself with it. A little consideration will show, however, that intuition is likely to mislead us much more often than reason. One's knowledge about oneself, for instance, is obtained entirely from the inside, by intuition, and should therefore be perfectly reliable according to Bergson. It depends on intuition alone at least so far as mental states are concerned. Is Bergson's opinion confirmed by experience? It is not. On the contrary, every-

body know that a man's opinion about himself is often worth nothing. A man is often incapable of seeing defects in himself which are patent to others, not only to his enemies, but even to his best friends. So also the opinion we form about a stranger when we meet him for the first time is based on intuition. We take a dislike to some people and a liking to others at first sight. These judgments are based on intuition, and they are certainly not always justified on a better acquaintance. Love, for instance, is proverbially blind, and yet people fall in love at first sight. The lover often feels that he knows the innermost feelings and thoughts of the loved one, but it is very often found that this intuitive feeling is not justified, as a disillusioned lover will perhaps be the first to admit. Intuition is, therefore, a much less reliable guide than reason.

Of course, intuition has its uses and it cannot be denied that we do often get correct knowledge by its means. But it has to be verified by experience before we can take it as correct. Even scientific discoveries are often made by a scientist making an intuitive guess at a scientific truth, but he will not announce it to the world as scientific truth unless he has first verified it by observation and experiment and logical reasoning based thereon.

People often distrust logic because it may lead to wrong results. Such people do not really understand logic. It is not an arbitrary set of rules imposed on the ordinary man by a set of philosophers. The rules of logic were in actual use by ordinary people before they were systematised and given the name of logic. They were such as met with universal acceptance even before they were formulated. As regards mistakes in reasoning, we shall have to consider deductive logic and inductive logic separately. Rules of the former are so easy to apply that mistakes can only arise from false premises being taken for granted or utter stupidity on the part of the reasoner. So it is usually inductive logic that is objected to, on

the ground that the generalisations with which it is concerned are not justified. For instance, we say that the sun will rise to-morrow morning at a particular hour on the strength of a generalisation based on thousands of years of observation, but of course, strictly speaking, we do not know for certain that it will rise. But the experience so often repeated give us such a great probability that we consider it a practical certainty. The greater the number of observations on which such a generalisation is based, the greater is the probability of its being true. It is not, however, an absolute certainty, and to that extent one may be justified in doubting it. Mahomedans, for instance, do not believe in such generalisations, and for the purposes of their calendar, the lunar month does not begin for them unless somebody actually sees the moon rise on the first day. Merely astronomical calculations do not satisfy them, but Hindus, using the lunar month, do believe in calculations, and their month begins at the calculated time even if the sky is cloudy and the moon is not seen. The Mahomedans are justified in taking that point of view, but I do not admire them for it.

Even in deductive logic, the premises may be based on induction, i. e. on a generalisation from experience. Consider the syllogism: "Man is mortal; Mr. X is a man; therefore Mr. X is mortal". Here the first proposition is a generalisation from the fact that there is no instance of anybody having lived on up to the present day from the beginnings of mankind. This gives us a practical certainty that the first statement is true, and if the second is true, the conclusion follows. Even those who may raise theoretical doubts as to the validity of the first statement will in practice assume that they have to die some time and make their wills accordingly.

Another objection is frequently raised to logical reasoning, viz., that scientific theories, which are based on logical reasoning, are so often changing. Now this objection is due to

ignorance of what constitutes a scientific theory. When a scientist wants to bring certain observed facts under a general rule, he makes an intuitive guess as to what that rule should be and then verifies that all the observed facts do come under it. Of course, there may be several ways of doing this, and so long as these several ways are all equally able to explain the facts, there is no choice between them, or perhaps the simplest of these theories is chosen as correct for the time being. If, however, another observed fact comes to light which cannot be explained by any of the existing theories, a new one has to be formed, or if only one or only some of the existing theories can explain it, the rest are automatically rejected and the choice is restricted to those that are capable of explaining the new fact as well as the old ones. And so on. It is impossible to say that the old theory was wrong and the new one right. One can only say that the new theory must be preferred to the old one because it can explain all the facts up to date, while the old one did not. There is no knowing, however, when a further fact may be discovered which is not adequately explained even by the new theory and so another theory may have to be formulated. These successive theories are merely successive approaches to the truth and one can never say that the exact truth has now been reached. A real scientist will, therefore, never be sorry if one of his theories has to be replaced by a new one, as this only means further progress.

This is the difference between religion and science. The former pretends that it has access to eternal truths which can never change, and so long as these refer to entirely imaginary things like god, soul, heaven, hell and so on, it is impossible either to prove or disprove them. But when a religion meddles with the material world, it is liable to be given the lie by science. The chapter on Genesis in the Bible, for instance, will hardly be accepted now by anybody who is in touch with modern scientific knowledge.

(To be concluded).

# Misconception about Mind

Mrs. Marion Pickett

**I**N the February issue of a journal called "Reason" which was kindly sent to me because in it a Dr. D'Avoine attacks my remarks made in my review of Prof. Hart's book "Mind in Transition."

This review was published by the New Book Company in their monthly issue of the New Book Digest of December, 1940.

The doctor seemed surprised that, because I do not agree with part of this book, I should recommend it do others. What an extraordinary mind the doctor must have! Surely nothing could be more obstructional to a deeper understanding of man than to refuse to read a book because it differed from our own opinions. Could anything be more unreasonable?

It is considered a compliment when one's opponent attacks with bitterness, or ridicule. Dr. D'Avoine uses both, but especially the latter.

I have yet to be convinced that even if the theory of man's descent from the lowest animals is correct, that that does away with the possibility of their being a God.

Nor can I be convinced that because man is made of the same materials and functions in a similar fashion as the ape, that it was necessary for man to be born of an ape.

The fastest plane of today is made of similar material to the first plane which took to the air, and functions in a similar manner, but it would be ludicrous to imagine these materials developed of themselves.

Man is a Creator, but not yet has he reached to the stage where he can create life. Animal is no creator, he is a builder, but not a creator.

Man creates out of the crudest of things, but he cannot create the materials he uses, until he can, he is unable to prove

that man came from the lowest of animals, that there is no God or Gods, or that he has conquered the forces of Nature which he can neither alter or destroy.

The whole of Nature is evidence that there is some being with a far greater mind than man's, and whose mathematical calculations are so perfect in the world of planets, stars, and other bodies in the Universe, that so far this tiny earth of ours steers its course through millions of years without clashing.

When we appreciate the complexities and the depths of unsuspected forces we grow more cautious about asserting anything.

The whole evolution which has taken place in our machinery, etc., since we discovered the power of steam, the laws of gravitation, and Electricity did not take place *in* those things, but in man's *mind*. I believe this was also possible in the Creator's mind hence my reference to Genesis. How many eons it took for this creation to reach the perfected creature 'man', I do not pretend to know, nor at which stage was man conscious of his soul.

In the heart of Australia there are still the altars hewn out of rock at which primitive man worshipped, also evidence that he was sensitive to his surroundings by the drawings and paintings which remain in places where primitive man is known no more.

Can any scientist in mathematical calculations find evidence of any animal being even conscious of his surroundings, except as it applies to his bodily comfort? Has he ever found evidence of any animal building altars to unknown gods? or any animal seeking food for his *mind* as well as his body as man does, even the most primitive?

I do not pretend to be able to answer why this is so, but I appreciate the difference between

man, and beast, and nowhere in the world I have travelled even in the most primitive of places where God's Nature is supreme, and which man's hand has not touched, have I ever found evidence that any living animal creates — but builds for body comforts and needs only — and that he 'destroys to live' while everywhere is evidence that man 'creates to live,' wherever he goes.

A living religious sense compels conviction and enters into man's consciousness. It is not necessary to express it in long prayers, emotional services, or gaudy vestments. It is alive in every tree, flower and mountain. Unfortunately, many crimes have been committed in the name of religion, and it is still used as a cloak to hide other things, (such as Hitler's declaration in his belief in God which Dr. D'Avoine evidently believes.....) but much is called religion which is merely a satisfaction for physical emotions.

That is no proof that there is no God or Gods.

If the New World has nothing better to offer than the old ideas of God and Man, than the idea that man sins because he came from the animals, then the New World is doomed. If man is to build a new World he must first develop a New Mind, untrammelled by obsolete ideas, and he must find new truths to curb the tendencies of cocksure men.

Everyone of the doctor's assumptions of what I visualise, of my nonsense, facetiousness and being in the school room, I leave alone; it is not worth my time or space to refute what is so palpably a misconception of my mind.

Such an attack proves rather that he is afraid of anyone who may have 'reason' for their ideas, and therefore is not quite sure of his own.

One can find the most delightful minds in the simplest of men; I have never thought of 'brain' — which can be educated — as being the same as 'mind'; the two are quite different

things; one is decidedly physical, the other still a mystery.

Material discoveries, chemical discoveries, etc., have been fast falling over themselves; each generation finds something which contradicts the mathematical calculations of their fathers. In the middle ages men were imprisoned for saying the world was 'round' and not 'flat' that the world revolved round the sun, and not the sun round the world! Some scientists freely acknowledge that the mind cannot be measured, weighed, or calculated, but most of them are atheists and these refuse to believe there is anything in man which cannot be proved by mathematical calculations.....

I think it is because these latter are in the majority that the world is as it is today, and until we take the trouble to seek the truth about man's existence without prejudice each so-called civilisation will pass as others have passed.

It never enters my head to visualise God, any more than to visualise space which cannot be measured because we are always discovering its boundlessness.

If the doctor finds amusements in what he thinks is my mind, well, he is welcome, it does not harm me, it merely reflects his own mind certainly, not mine.

Even if I believed all he states I do, it is exceedingly bad form to ridicule anyone's belief however crude and apparently stupid.

### Dr. D'Avoine's Remarks on Mrs. Marion Pickett's Reply.

Mrs. Marion Pickett's personal ideas and belief about Mind, the descent of Man and God, however fantastic, are no concern of mine and I consider that it would be a waste of time and absolutely unprofitable to refute them. It is clear that she is not conversant with the theory of Evolution and what competent authorities say on the descent of Man. Such being the case, it is not at all surprising that she has also such ideas about Mind. As regards her ideas of God as the Creator of everything that exists, such a book as "The Existence of God" by

(Continued on page 60)

A little less spirituality, and the Indians would now be free—free from foreign domination and from the tyranny of their own prejudices and traditions.

—*Atmosphere*

# Why Slow Spread of Rationalism in India?

By: Akshayakumar R. Desai

ONE of the astounding facts about modern Indian Society is the extremely slow rate at which rationalist ideas and scientific materialist culture are spreading even among the educated strata of the people. In spite of the fact that Rationalism, both as a philosophy and a movement, came into existence a century and a half back in Europe, India, despite its organic, political and economic contact with European countries, continues to remain apparently an invulnerable fortress of irrational conceptions and ways of life. Not only the masses who can be excused for persisting in superstitious habits of thought and action due to their poverty, illiteracy and ignorance but even a great proportion of the intelligentsia who have been educated and have therefore access to rationalist culture, are in the grip of unscientific antiquated mode of thought and life.

The slow spread of Rationalism in our country in spite of the strenuous efforts of various rationalist groups including the Rationalist Association of India is due to a variety of historical and contemporary social causes. We shall try to locate these causes.

First, India is at present under foreign domination. The Indian people feel a natural and healthy resentment against this domination. They feel a patriotic hostility to the foreign rule. Now, this hostility, instead of being restricted to the political domination of India by a foreign nation, is *wrongly* extended to whatever pertains to the foreigner. An antagonistic attitude is taken not only towards the foreign rule but also towards the culture of the foreigners. Now Rationalist culture originated in Europe and was created by the advanced intellectuals of England, France and other countries. Indian

Nationalism which has hitherto been dominated by leaders such as Tilak, Gandhi, etc., has not only condemned British Domination of India but also British Rationalist Culture. An integral part of Indian Nationalism has been till now its hatred of the Rationalist culture of the West.

This hostility to the foreign rule and the resultant uncritical aversion to the scientific culture of the West, felt by the Indian Nationalist nourished on the preachings of Tilak, Gandhi and others, makes him *idealise* the reactionary social institutions and backward culture of ancient India. He dreams of a *renaissance*, a modified revival of ancient Indian Culture, its 20th century edition. This recoil from the rationalist culture of the West because it is the culture of one who is holding India in bondage, is one of the main reasons why rationalism does not rapidly spread among the Indian people, why even the educated classes remain impervious to its appeal, why even the Indian Nationalist, instead of liquidating the reactionary ideological inheritance in the form of a mass of mind-deadening superstitions and religious mysticism, actually revels in day dreams of resurrecting the culture of India's hoary past.

There is a second reason for the tardy growth of the rationalist movement. The enlightened section of the people which has already freed itself from religious obscurantism and assimilated modern rationalist and materialist culture, fail to appreciate the necessity of propagating this culture among the people. A good proportion of these feel that the immediate, decisive and basic task before the Indian People to-day is to concentrate on the struggle for national freedom. They feel that the cultural

development will follow political emancipation. The healthy rebellious and iconoclastic energies of these individuals are therefore exclusively absorbed in the political movement.

Though it is indisputable that a rationalist culture on a nation-wide scale can be built up only after the Indian people have won political power which they can further use to legislate out of existence numerous, obsolete, tyrannical social institutions existing to-day and to organize cultural campaigns (using school, radio, stage, screen etc.) against all superstitious conceptions among the people, it should also be recognized that wide rationalist propaganda and educational work have to be done, even before that, to make the struggle for political freedom successful.

One of the fundamental (if not the fundamental) reasons why the nationalist movement to-day is unable to achieve national freedom is that this movement of millions is dominated by the Gandhian Ideology which is one of the most atrociously irrational ideologies that ever emerged. Unless a political movement is guided by a rational concept of its objective and the methods to reach that objective, it can only dissipate the energies of the participants. Unless a rational exposure of Gandhi's irrational programme such as unhistorical return to the Charkha, religionising of politics, Satyagraha and other planks, is carried on, how can the struggle for independence thrive and be successful?

Only those who have liberated themselves from reactionary ideas and have a scientific conception of life, society, social and political problems can successfully lead movements of popular freedom. They alone can guide the nation to higher and higher peaks of social and cultural progress.

Rationalism rose in the 18th century in Europe. In France, Voltaire, Diderot, Holbach, Helvetius and others were the heroic pioneers of Rationalist thought. They thereby also became the precursors, ideological creators, of the titanic

rational social phenomenon known as the French Revolution which blasted away all reactionary social and political institutions and freed the mind of the French people from the Catholic Christian superstition. Rationalism was supported in France and also in England and European countries by the socially and economically powerful class of society viz. the rising bourgeoisie (the class of enterprising merchants and manufacturers). This class found in rationalism a strong weapon to fight the Christian Church which enslaved the human mind in the prison of irrational social conceptions, like the Divine Right of Kings, the eternal validity of the decadent feudal system, the sacrosanct character of the privileges of the degenerate feudal nobles and which above all tried to strangle the enterprising and inquiring impulses of man to explore the world and reach a scientific understanding of that world. The bourgeoisie needed for the expansion of their trade and manufacture, the development of science (use for navigation etc.), increase of the scientific knowledge of the world, the liberation of the people from irrational taboos which feudal Religion imposed on them. They adopted Rationalism as their powerful ideological artillery to storm the heights of superstition which the Church spread among the people.

In India, however, the bourgeoisie (except a microscopic part) while using the modern industrial technique which grew only out of the advance of science and rationalist culture, are opposed to Rationalism. Instead of warring on superstition, they ally with it and finance its propagation. They do not crusade against irrational social institutions like the caste system but strive to conserve it or at best rationalize it as if an irrationality can ever be rationalized. They subsidise religious institutions and groups which poison the people with misconceptions of the world and thereby stultify their mind.

In Europe the bourgeoisie supported the

Rationalist Movement rendering it financial and social aid. The rationalist movement was not handicapped as to the material means. In India, the wealthy classes themselves remain in the grip of religious superstition and are avowedly hostile to the Rationalist movement. This financial handicap is one of the reasons why the heroic band of rationalists in India are unable to extend their propaganda work.

Another striking feature of Indian society is that the healthy indignation against irrational institutions or practices is not highly developed even among the educated classes. Their cowardly adaptation and capitulation before reactionary customs, taboos and practices are incredible. The pressure of forces of social reaction has stifled their rational wrath against institutions which enslave man, cripple his mind and degrade him to the status of a robot.

There are isolated outbreaks against a social oppression or sporadic rebellion against a social taboo (stray cases of widow remarriage, or revolt against corrupt priesthood) but as a whole, the educated classes, unlike the intellectuals in China, or other backward countries, do not feel a vital anger against the whole complex of superstitious practices which form Indian life, they do not feel a healthy social horror at all anti-social things. They thereby only abdicate their glorious historical role of being the intellectual advance guard and leaders of the people organising them for an irreconcilable struggle against the effete social structure and its reactionary ideology.

While the Rationalist Movement progresses at a very slow tempo due to the above mentioned reasons, we should not underestimate one of the strongest obstacles to its advance viz. reactionary Gandhism. Gandhi is frankly opposed to Rationalism, Materialism, and all that comprises modern scientific culture. His assiduous propaganda for the last twenty years, through the Indian National Congress and with

the aid of the unlimited financial aid of wealthy people, against modern Rationalism and in favour of Ram Rajya, the myth of the Inner Voice of God, conserving of caste-system, spiritualizing i. e. irrationalizing of politics, unhistorical return to the technique and economy of charkha, efficacy of prayer etc., has worked havoc on the mind of the Indian people. He has prevented the people including a big section of the intelligentsia from orienting towards Rationalist and Materialist ideology which he openly brands as un-Indian and un-spiritual. He frankly declares that he aims at spiritualizing of politics, injecting it with religion i.e. with irrationality.

Gandhism has worked as a dangerous ideological force paralysing the creative mental energy even of the intellectuals. The Rationalist Movement in India finds in Gandhism a formidable obstacle.

### Dr. D'Avoine's Remarks

*(Continued from page 57)*

Joseph McCabe, might have made her realize how benighted she is on the subject.

I was only concerned with her assertion that scientists now-a-days refuse to accept a theory (namely, the evolution of the human mind from the lower animals) which, she says, cannot be supported by scientific fact. According to her, scientists no longer deny the existence of man's soul or spirit though they did that before, and now they call that supposed something in man a fourth entity which they hope may give a better understanding of man.

I called this pure nonsense and said that she was romancing in making such a statement about the alleged changes in the attitude of scientists on the question. I challenged her to name only three scientists, three biologists of repute, who could make such an absurd statement.

She has not named any and I dare say that she will be hard put to it to do so. It was really in this connection that I was interested in her review of Prof. Hart's book. I thought such a bold and untrue statement could not be allowed to go unchallenged and there my interest in Mrs. Marion Pickett's views ends.



# REVIEWS

**THE TRIAL CELESTIAL** by Suryadutt J. Bhatt, Karnatak Publishing House, Chira Bazar, Bombay 2. 60pp. Price Re 1/-.

**T**HIS little play in one act which can be read within an hour makes most interesting and thought-provoking reading. Mr. Bhatt subjects the whole ideological structure of orthodox nationalism and the belief in God to a devastating criticism. There is not a dull passage and the reader's interest is kept alive throughout. Mr. Bhatt depicts an old man in search of God and his final disillusionment. The style is forceful and uncompromising. The following description of the Celestial Hall of Justice will help to give readers an idea of the scathing criticism to which present day values are subjected. Scene II, page 23:—

"The Hall is evidently a hall of justice where the celestial law is administered, the sources of that law are found in divine love, freedom and laughter. The law is unwritten because the sources are pure and divine. No figure of the Goddess of Justice with scales in her hands is seen in the hall evidently because the scales have administered injustice merely according to the petrified law."

"The procedural law is exceptionally different from the one usual in civilized states on the Earth. In fact, there is no trial; no accuser and no accused; no plaintiff and no defendant. This is apparently because no two liars are set against each other to investigate the truth according to the earthly jurisprudence. In the jurisprudence of His Omnipotence investigation proceeds by disabusing the mind of the prisoner from ignorance and fear by inviting him to visualise the celestial truth. In fact, it is a process of enlightenment. In the end no sentence or degree is passed for they are superfluities."

"In the Hall there is no pomp and no splendour; for it is all idolatry. There is no law books; for they are replete with crudities and

vulgarities. There are no bailiffs and no guards; for the prisoner is free. And even there are no Masters of the Rolls; for His Omnipotence can see the dynamic reality."

"The law of the Almighty being pure and divine it was found that politicians stood charged with arson and rape for their speeches; the prophets with blasphemy, the kings with homicide, and the rich with brigandage. But as the celestial law forbade punishment, which could never be a means of refinement, the convicts were never punished."

Mr. Bhatt has shown Voltaire as sitting next to the throne of the Almighty. This is an interesting coincidence, as readers of the *Rationalist Annual* will remark, which contains Mr. Adams Gowans White excellent article on "Voltaire in Heaven." The fact that two writers in different parts of the world, and not knowing each other, say that Voltaire is in Heaven should be "evidence" enough for religionists to believe that the great infidel is really in heaven.

In fairness to Mr. Suryadutt J. Bhatt we may state that the play was written in February 1940 six months before the publication of the *Rationalist Annual for 1941*.

We think Mr. Bhatt could have selected some character from Hindu Mythology or Indian Philosophy instead of Voltaire. The publication is very well got up and printed and we hope it will have a wide sale.

---

**NEW LIFE.** Monthly magazine published by the Lucknow University Writers' Association, Old Baradari, University of Lucknow. Annual subscription Rs. 6/-. Six months Rs. 3/4-.

*New Life* is a student magazine and as the Managing Editor, Mr. S. S. Suri, informs us, has the same ideals as "Reason." It contains interesting and informative articles on various

subjects. The February issue contains an article by Miss Sarawat Rahman on the "Unnecessity of Theism" in which she deals with the various arguments brought forward in support of theism and against atheism. Other articles are "New Life for Mankind" by S. Perti, "Modern Russian Literature" by S. S. Suri.

Its Editorial Board consists of Shakuntala Jaspal, *Chairwoman*; Ragindar, Mehta, B. P. Misra, H. Q. Rizvi, *Editors*. Mustasad Ahmad, *Study Circle Secretary*. S. S. Suri, *Secretary to the Editorial Board*.

We hope *New Life* has the wide circulation it deserves among students.

**TEACHING.** A Quarterly Technical Journal for Teachers. Oxford University Press, Post Box 31, Bombay. Annual subscription Rs 2/8/-. Single Copy 9 annas.

The journal is edited by Prof. H. V. Hampton and is of a high literary standard. The December 1940 issue contains an interesting article on "The Training of the Mind" by E. C. Marchant in which he discusses the ways in which to avoid producing "that irritatingly superficial type of person, bedecked with a sparkling veneer of new and undigested opinions," but to produce "a cultured gentleman with a body of assimilated knowledge and considered opinion of his own, solidly based on thought and sifted truth."

He writes: "Respect for absolute accuracy clear perception of the difference between fact and opinion is the (second) quality which we would encourage. It is supremely important in these days that those who read and are looked up to for information shall never fail immediately to distinguish that which is fact from that which is mere rumour or opinion. A boy with a trained respect for truth will refuse categorically to accept any of the headlines in the daily press until he is himself convinced by the evidence on which they are based."

He further writes, "Education merely begins at school. It finishes only with death. All

that the schoolmaster can hope to do is to introduce the student to the manifold branches of knowledge, grip his interest in them and start him on the path of learning. In most cases his task is then finished. But the task of the student is by no means over. Throughout his whole life he will continue to learn. Some branches of knowledge will interest him more than others and to those he will devote much time and happy labour: but if his teachers' labours have not been in vain he will never divorce himself entirely from the pursuit of those studies which make up the whole pattern of human knowledge and experience."

But at the end of his article Mr. Marchant takes an excursion into a sphere in which we think his opinion is not "solidly based on thought and sifted truth."

"We turn finally", he writes, "to those mystical lands beyond the hills." "It is they which are really the ends for which we live: it is in order to pursue them that we seek material comfort, and their acquisition is in itself its own fullest reward." "There are still worlds beyond the realms of pure reason. If we fail to stretch out and commune with these worlds we are left unsatisfied, we are in no harmony with the universe." However, Mr. Merchant himself warns us against being led by empty phrases and catchwords.

**A RATIONALIST REVIEWS THE BIBLE and OUTLINES RATIONALISM.** By Henry J. Hayward. Issued by The Rationalist Association and Sunday Freedom League, 315 Victoria Arcade, Auckland (C. I.), New Zealand. 16pp. 3d.

This is a pamphlet putting forth some of the contradictions and absurdities found in the bible and will prove very useful and handy for rationalist propaganda among Christians. It may be ordered through the Rationalist Association at 3 annas each or Rs. 2/- per dozen, post free.

**THE MONTHLY RECORD.** Organ of the South Place Ethical Society, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, W. C. 1. Edited by F. G. Gould. Annual subscription 3s.

This journal publishes summaries of the weekly lectures delivered at the Conway Hall, which make interesting reading. The December issue contains summaries of lectures on "I believe in Man" by John Katz, "Is the Dark Age Returning" by Joseph McCabe, etc. Readers will find it interesting and worth subscribing to.

**THE I. C. S.** and other all-India Services by J. B. Petit, 55pp. Price not mentioned.

A reproduction in pamphlet form of the series of articles which appeared in the *Sunday Chronicle* of 6th October 1940 and subsequent issues. A criticism of the Services and suggestions for their improvement.

**THE AGE OF MECHANISED FORCE** by General de Gaulle. In French and English. Alliance Francaise of Bombay, 134, Apollo St., Fort, Bombay.

A reproduction in pamphlet form of the article which appeared in the *National Review* of London.

An inspection into the causes of the fall of France and a plea for organisation and greater action in the prosecution of the war.

### ALSO RECEIVED

**THE CONTEMPT OF FREEDOM.** The Russian Experiment and After, by Prof. M. Polanyi, Watts & Co., 4 & 6 Johnson's Court, Fleet St., London, E. C. 4. 116 pp. Price 5s. net.

A keen and well-documented exposure of the cultural and economic failure of collectivism.

**REVIEW OF PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION**, January 1940.

A quarterly journal and organ of the Academy of Philosophy and Religion, 3-A Lowther Road, Allahabad. Annual subscription Rs. 6/-

### Intellectual Freedom

**T**HOSE to whom intellectual freedom is personally important may be in a minority in the community, but among them are the men of most importance to the future. We have seen the importance of Copernicus, Galileo and Darwin in the history of mankind, and it is not to be supposed that the future will produce no more such men. If they are prevented from doing their work and having their due effect, the human race will stagnate, and a new Dark Age will succeed, as the earlier Dark Age succeeded the brilliant period of antiquity. New truth is often uncomfortable, especially to the holders of power; nevertheless amid the long record of cruelty and bigotry, it is the most important achievement of our intelligent but wayward species.

—BERTRAND RUSSELL in *Religion and Science*.

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# Streams of Reason

M. V. V. K. Rangachari.

**F**LOATING down the memory, the early R. P. A. Cheap Reprints churned the Indian mind when the new century began. The crowded assemblage of creeds and cults attested Grant Allen's "Evolution of the Idea of God." Here was the clue to the phases of Animism, Polytheism and other varieties of belief, ritual and practice. It is evident that mankind—Indian or other—is of two tribes, "Thinker or Believer." H. Spencer's *Education* did service in the open field. The assessment of "Humanity's gain from Unbelief" was by no means inadequate, nor did the "Martyrdom of Man" freeze the spirit of enquiry. Fresh air breathed into the dungeon of superstition when "the Religion of the Open Mind" was hailed.

To the privilege of standing up for Rationalism in the country was added the personal direction in thought and expression from C. T. Gorham, F. J. Gould, Vevian Phelps etc., most of whom alas are not with us now. But the "Pioneers of Johnson's Court" and "Common-sense Thoughts" etc., were sailing from Ealing, London, while "the Churches and Modern Thought," "Modern Knowledge and old Beliefs" etc., were rounding the Cape of Good Hope. Many were the tracts, pamphlets and books from rationalist pens that bear witness to the cause sustained during long decades. Above them stands out Frazer's "Golden Bough" braving all ages and canvassing diverse climes. To wade through its Homeopathic Magic, mysticism and cults was stupendous exercise even in the Watts' abridged edition. Crawley's "Mystic Rose" was another research-work into primitive marriage-practice and belief. The celebration of the new vine, the corn-cake feastings, fertilisation by burial, eating the gods, fecundity—these are chapters in antro-

logical observance which do not get dim with age.

Thus prepared, the "History of Sacerdotal Celibacy" does not shock us with its marvels of degradation and crime. Later, in answer to the neo-mysticisms of Jeans and Eddington, the mathematician Levy tackles the "Universe of Science." Our socio-political status is restored in C. E. M. Joad's "Liberty To-day". While this sumptuous fare enlarges our appetite for science and sociology, H. G. Well's "Short History of the World" maintained the sense of proportion so very necessary to the correct reading of the world and "Man's Place in Nature," shows us what it is all about. The tendency to bitterness towards opposing ideas is well checked by Morley's "On Compromise," holding to the fundamental faith in man's capacity to gain in truth, beauty and goodness, the Thinker's Library helps with its unmistakeable light towards progress in what should otherwise remain a darkened world.

It is pretentious to select some titles. Some aim at special targets like legends, stories, Christian and other. Our Puranas and myths are no less queer. Some works expound obtuse metaphysics, others theology. There are contradictions and revisions even as the Vedas and the Upanishads are bewildering, and the song of the Gita is one sublime antithesis. We know these and much more in verse and prose. But primarily the rationalist contacts, the Literary Guide, and the renewed *Annals* keep me fit in my journey through life. My exercises in REASON reflect, however feebly, if anything, my own sense of obligation to these, time and again.

Cocanada,  
23-2-1941.

If there is anything of value, it is liberty.  
Liberty is the air of the soul, the sunshine of  
life. Without it the world is a prison, and the  
Universe is an infinite dungeon.

—Ingersoll.

# REASON

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Editor:

Abraham Solomon

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*All contributions, correspondence, press cuttings, Journals in exchange, enquiries regarding advertisement rates, etc., should be addressed to Mr. Abraham Solomon, Editor, "REASON," 59, Karmani Building, Arthur Road, Bombay 11.*

*We invite contributions of not more than 2,000 words on topics of interest to rationalists. They should be type-written. If not published they will not be returned unless stamps are enclosed.*

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THE spectre of fratricidal communalism is again haunting India. It has trailed a path of murder and arson from Dacca in the east, through Cawnpore and Ahmedabad, to Bombay in the west. Bitterness and misunderstanding between communities are hourly on the increase. Baronets, Zamindars and all manner of vested interests are rushing into the breach shouting that their respective religions are in danger and in the name of the holy religions they are sparing no effort to split the country into a thousand mutually hostile communal-stans. They play upon the religious emotions of the backward masses of this country to achieve a vain-glorious power in the mutilated fragments of India which they hope to set up. The fundamental economic unity of this country, the supreme questions of the hunger, poverty, and ignorance of the masses, the essential civil liberties of the people and social harmony are no concern of these honourable men who today loom large on the Indian political and social horizon. Bankruptcy of religion, especially of organised religion which thrives on superstitions and

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ignorance and blind obedience of people cannot be revealed by more painful facts.

x                      x                      x

Human beings must retrace their steps from this suicidal ethics of murder and social bitterness. The government of this country cannot absolve itself of its responsibilities for what has happened and is threatening the future. Universal primary and secondary education of a secular and scientific character is one of the chief means of counteracting this vicious communalism. But the government has been callously negligent in providing this essential basis of social harmony and progress. It lays its favours on the most highly paid and unimaginable civil service in the world, on an army which besides swallowing up a far greater percentage than in many other countries also perpetuates all the caste and communal distinctions within the ranks. The percentage of the national budget that is available for education is deplorably low and the government must take its full blame for such a low national income and still lower percentage of expenditure on education.

x                      x                      x

The Bengal government under a premier who has described a full circle of evolution from Congress nationalism and agrarian radicalism to communalism has been responsible for introducing the communal virus even into primary and secondary education in Bengal. The changes that this government has recently brought about in the educational system of Bengal have been condemned as reactionary by an important committee appointed by the Calcutta University. This pollution and communal regimentation of young minds cannot be too strongly condemned. Without stopping at this the government proceeded further to introduce communalism into the Calcutta Municipal Corporation. Theocratic states and municipal bodies seem to be "the enlightened goal" of these defenders of religion. In

such an atmosphere, artificially surcharged with religious passions, the rival communal groups started a most detestable exchange of abusive accusation over the census operations. The result has been an orgy of murder and arson by a group of inflamed and ignorant people in Dacca. You sow communalism and reap the whirlwind of destruction and mad fury.

An independent and impartial inquiry as demanded by the Ahmedabad Bar Association should be made as to the immediate causes of these riots and adequacy of such preventive and penal measures as adopted by the government. Those who have been behind the screen should be brought to book. Incompetence and bias among officials wherever present should be severely punished. Above all the government of this country should become subject to popular control. The communal and gutter press must be stopped and full freedom of discussion granted to those who seek communal harmony and peace. The progressive elements in the country should not sit back aghast at the sight of these unhealthy communal quarrels but should go forward to forge unity among the communities by bringing the large masses of poverty-stricken people of India into a common struggle for economic and social amelioration of this country.

x                      x                      x

The Hindu and Mohamedan social systems need radical overhauling. The urgency of this with regard to women's rights has been partially recognised by the appointment of a committee to study and make recommendations with regard to Hindu women. We hope that out of the investigations and deliberations of this committee a comprehensive scheme of progressive legislation would emerge. The piecemeal reforms carried out in recent years have proved inadequate. The enlightened public of this country must steadily educate the people about the necessity of progressive reforms and co-operation. In this connection we wholeheartedly support Dr. Deshmukh's Bill

which seeks to establish the right to divorce and judicial separation.

The international situation is indeed perilous. Since the publication of the last issue of this journal, a couple of more nations have been bludgeoned into serfdom and the tide is swooping forward. It would seem that soon the war would spread to the Far East as well, engulfing within its insidious orbit millions more of innocent men and women. Amidst the fury and agony of such a gigantic struggle we should remember that victory of armies in the field would be sterile if the progressive forces of the world have not won the majority of the common men in all countries to a vision of an orderly, peaceful and just social system. We are afraid that the progress so far registered in this direction is very inadequate. The demands of democratic India remain unfulfilled and British Statesmen even in this hour of great peril have not realised the necessity of a free and progressive India.

The racial arrogance of the South African government is yet another indication that the human mind has progressed very little even in the face of such a catastrophe as the present war. The defence of the Versailles Treaty as a model for a new one, put up by the *Times of India* a few days back, makes dismal reading. Not only must Hitlerism be defeated but equally all allied systems of exploitation, and the people of the world must awaken themselves to a new sense of equality, peace and justice. Reason must prevail!

### BETWEEN OURSELVES.

Readers will be pleased to know that Prof. R. D. Karve will again take up charge of the editorship of *Reason* from next month. We hope members will continue their efforts to increase the membership of the R. A. I. and help to spread the progressive influence of the rationalist outlook over a wider area. The R. A. I. now has some new keen members and we hope the Association will greatly increase its activities during this year.

## Notes & News.

By A. HUSEIN

SEVERAL things have happened since the last issue of *Reason*. Members of the R. A. I. are already aware of some of them through the circular-letter which was sent before the Annual Meeting. We are very pleased to note that the appeal for Funds for the sustenance of *Reason* has received a fairly generous response.

WE regret we have been compelled to make this issue a combined one for April & May. This was due to unexpected difficulties and pressure of work. The preparation of this issue has also been greatly hampered due to the Curfew Order in the city. We crave the indulgence of our readers in this matter.

READERS will please note the change in the address of our Association which will henceforth be 41, Queen's Road, Bombay. In order that there should be no delay, we request that all correspondence regarding the R.A.I. as well as *Reason* should please be addressed to Mr. Abraham Solomon, 59, Kermani Building, Arthur Road, Bombay 11. But all payments, money-orders, cheques, etc. should be sent to the Hon. Treasurer, Mr. D. R. D. Wadia, at the office of the Association at 41, Queen's Road, Bombay.

THE Annual Meeting and Dinner held in March last received some publicity in the local papers and as a result the Association has gained some new members. The Dinner was well attended and a general need was felt and expressed all round for the expansion of the activities of the Association and the spread of the Rationalist movement in India. Freethinkers in this country must remember that the Rationalist movement here is still in its infancy and it will require much hard work and patience before it can become a dynamic

and powerful movement for the social and intellectual emancipation of the Indian people. And to make it so is the task of everyone who calls himself a Rationalist.

x            x            x

**O**N Sunday, 9th March, Professor R. D. Karve spoke in *Marathi* on "Rationalism" at the Guru Hall, Dadar, Bombay. The lecture was organised by the Sarvajanic Vidyalaya.

x            x            x

**W**E learn that some enthusiastic and progressive-minded students are arranging a play to be staged towards the end of May in Bandra. We have not yet received the details which will be announced later in local papers. We hope members and readers will try and attend and give them the encouragement they deserve.

x            x            x

**W**E congratulate Prof. Muranjan on his being awarded the D. Sc. Degree by the University of London for his book on *Modern Banking in India*. Dr. Muranjan is Professor of Banking at the Sydenham College of Commerce and Economics, Bombay. After a brilliant career at the University of Bombay, passing the M.A. examination in the first class first, Mr. Muranjan joined the Bombay Educational Service as Professor of Economics and soon earned reputation as an educationist and an economist. Later, he took the B.Sc. Degree of the University of London and was allowed to proceed directly for the D.Sc. Degree as an exceptional case.

Dr. Muranjan has an excellent record of research work, and among the numerous books written by him may be mentioned *The Currency and Prices in India*, *The Study of Prices in India*. He is actively associated with the Indian Statistical Institute. Dr. Muranjan has been a member of the Executive Committee of the Rationalist Association of India for the last two years.

x            x            x

**W**E congratulate Miss Kapila Khandwala, formerly one of the Secretaries of the Association, on her election to the Bombay University Senate.

## "REASON FUND"

We gratefully acknowledge the following donations to the *Reason Fund*.

N. M. Bathena, Bombay	...	Rs.	60
J. B. H. Wadia, Bombay	...	"	10
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Rao Bahadur Dr. D. L. Sahasrabuddhe, Poona	...	"	30
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C. L. D'Avoine, Bombay	...	"	10
J. R. Labelle, Bombay	...	"	5
D. D. Karve, Poona	...	"	10
Joseph Sampson	...	"	5

We gratefully acknowledge the following renewals of membership and new membership subscriptions:—

Homi Chinoy Rs. 10/-, Rufus Hurry Rs. 5/-, R. K. Jhaveri Rs. 5/-, S. R. Joglekar Rs. 5/-, D. D. Karve Rs. 5/-, J. F. Martin Rs. 5/-, Joseph I. Samson Rs. 5/-, Kabir Rs. 5/-, V. D. Satghare Rs. 5/-, M. M. Senapati Rs. 2/-, V. V. Sapre Rs. 2/-, S. F. Thaver Rs. 5/-, Salim Mahomed Rs. 5/-, V. R. Gupte Rs. 5/-, M. M. Razdan Rs. 5/-, R. K. Shinde Rs. 2/-, C. C. Basu Rs. 2/-, S. C. Sen Rs. 5/-, C. R. Kundi 3s. 6d. R. R. Shukla 3s 6d.

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# Rationalism And The New World Order

(Based on a lecture delivered at the Cosmo Circle, Bandra)

By R. D. Karve

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(Continued from last issue)

Coming now to the second part of the subject, it is obvious that in any proposed reconstruction of the world on an equitable basis, no religion can even be considered, because in spite of the statements of some people that all religions have some common factors, it is obvious that these common factors are such that they are acceptable even to irreligious people, so that it is no use to introduce any religion in the new order. But as we have seen, even religious people are apt to reason in spite of themselves and rationalism can therefore be taken as the basis of reconstruction without necessarily offending even religious people, since complete freedom in religious matters will naturally be allowed to everybody by any rationalist as a matter of course.

As to how this reconstruction is to come into force, opinions may differ. Though communists maintain that a red revolution in the Russian style is absolutely necessary, I think it can be done in a much more reasonable way and that a gradual change will be all the more stable, and will avoid the enormous loss of life caused by the Russian experiment. If we are to accept humanitarian principles in the end, it seems hardly proper to start with a massacre and a dictatorship, which last may be very difficult to get rid of, considering the usual experience that people in power are hardly ever willing to give it up.

The charge is very often made against rationalists that they disregard sentiment. That is what they ought to do in so far as reasoning is concerned, because there is no doubt that sentiment interferes with reasoning. But even rationalists are perfectly well aware that human

happiness has a great deal to do with sentiment and even sentiment can be considered dispassionately when it does not concern oneself individually.

Remembering that we are considering worldly happiness exclusively, the important point is to see what are the desiderata of the new order from this point of view. Happiness will be impossible unless the bare necessities of life are unconditionally secured to every individual. Mr. H. G. Wells's small book on the "Rights of Man" is an excellent discussion of some of these, though not all. Without adequate food, enough clothing, which may not perhaps be at all necessary in tropical climates, adequate shelter, and medical attention whenever required, no man or woman can be really happy. Mr. Wells proposes that these should be secured to every individual in a community free of charge, that is at public expense, because if this is not done, it will be impossible to maintain health, and some people may fall ill and become a danger to the community. Though it may seem at first sight rather strange that persons who are too lazy to work for their living should be provided for by the community, a little consideration will show that this has perforce to be done as a defensive measure. It is arguable that this will remove all stimulus to work, but very few people will be satisfied with these bare necessities and they will not get anything more without working for it. As a matter of fact, each community does provide for a certain number of beggars in one form or another and this is only a public recognition of that fact. It is certainly not normal for a man in good health to

be content to do nothing because his bare needs are provided for, but if there are any such people, they will have to be tolerated.

Further consideration of Mr. Wells's proposals show, however, that his idea of providing free food for everybody, sufficient in quantity and adequate in quality to maintain health, is a chimera for the present, as the world does not produce sufficient food for its population and there are very few countries considered independently that are self-supporting in this matter. The proposal may however be provisionally accepted as an ideal whenever the food supply is sufficient. We shall return to this point later on.

Leisure is another necessity which is very often overlooked. Nobody can be really happy if he has no leisure, and this can be secured to everybody with the help of machinery, if this is used, not for profit, but to satisfy the needs of the community. This will only be possible if the machinery is owned by the community instead of a few capitalists and is worked just enough and no more. The proper use of machinery is not to leave nine persons out of work because one man can do the work of ten with a machine, but to divide the work among all the ten, so that each will get both work and leisure.

The principle of equality has often been loudly proclaimed without any proper realisation of the extent to which it can possibly be applied. Russia tried to apply it at the beginning by making all salaries equal, but had soon to give up the attempt. It is obvious that there is no equality in nature, but all civilisation is an attempt in that direction. The jungle law, "Might is Right" is no longer accepted between individuals though it is still in force between nations. It must, however, be admitted that perfect equality is unattainable, since even if two individuals are artificially maintained in identical circumstances, they will not be on the same level physically and mentally, and these natural inequalities will gradually and

inevitably increase. All that the community can do, therefore, in that direction is to provide equal opportunities for education and training to everybody and to consider everybody equal in the eyes of the law. It is also important to note that when everybody has his needs attended to, there will be much less room for discontent even if some people acquire more than their bare needs because they have greater ability. It is, really speaking, impossible to make everybody equally happy. Even the capacity for happiness is a matter of nerves and in this respect, everybody is not equally equipped. So equal happiness for everybody is an ideal not worth considering.

One important point however, remains to be considered. Sex plays an important part in the life of any one who is not sexless and the satisfaction of sex must, therefore, be included in the primary needs of any person. It may perhaps be said that a community can hardly provide sex satisfaction to everybody, but the community can do a great deal to make people happy in this respect by removing all the unnecessary hindrances to happiness which result from tradition. In fact, if it is recognised that individual liberty should be restricted as little as possible in the new order, these hindrances will automatically disappear. Present sex morals are based on the dependence of a woman on her father or husband, and if in the new order the two sexes are put exactly on the same level as they ought to be, these sex morals must necessarily go overboard. Sex relations between any two individuals will then be considered a private affair which concerns nobody else, unless they lead to progeny, which, of course, concerns the community. In that case, the community will have to provide for the proper rearing of the children if the parents are found to be unfit or unable to do it themselves. In any case, food will have to be provided by the community as we have decided, and even when the food production

*(Continued on page 76)*

# Bombay Easter Messages

By C. L. D'Avoine

**F**OR some years now, it has become the practice of certain newspapers in England to entertain their readers with the silliest stuff imaginable on the occasion of such festivals as Christmas, Good Friday and Easter. Such occasions are thought to be fitting times to convey ethical and moral lessons believed to be of deep spiritual value to the people, and professional theologians in that country make use of both the pulpit and the press to issue their messages which are nothing more than pure make-belief.

Not to be behind the times, *The Times of India* here faithfully emulates those papers, and on such occasions never fails to serve its readers with those homilies which are replete with insincerity and cant.

Christmas, of course, is the season to remind Christians that the birth of Jesus heralded an era of peace on earth to men of goodwill, and if only people were to remember that maxim and act accordingly, this earth would be a paradise.

Well this earth is certainly not a paradise yet, though 1900 years have elapsed; but Christians think they are very optimistic, and one of the virtues which they claim to be their own is Hope.

So they have hope that their faith will at last turn this planet into a paradise and every year they are reminded to strive to make it so. To live peacefully and to love one another are no doubt Christian precepts, but in practice Christians are the last people on earth to do so.

The War, of course, has opened wide the flood gates of emotion and sentimentalism, and the writers of such homilies in newspapers, who are generally priests, take full advantage of the times to bolster up their religion. People are told that the terrible calamity we are having now would have been impossible

if people had not forsaken their religion and neglected God.

Though we, ourselves, they say, are God-fearing and decent people, it is clear that the enemy have abandoned all their Christian principles and have reverted to paganism and barbarism, and people are exhorted to go to Church, to pray and pray and as Jesus Christ sacrificed himself to save mankind, they also must make the greatest sacrifice possible in order to save Christian Civilization from such hordes.

To any intelligent person not overcome by religious feelings, it is clear that this is pure propaganda, not so much for the successful prosecution of the war, but to favour the Christian religion which is fast losing its hold on people in the West. Small wonder that many have denounced this false propaganda and said that Christian Civilization, whatever is meant by that, is not worth saving.

This false propaganda is, however, on the wing and everywhere the professional theologians, aided by religious bigots, the press and the radio, are doing their utmost to boost their religion and to push themselves forward.

Such being the case, one expected some such movement here on the occasion of Good Friday and Easter. This was duly provided by *The Times of India* which enlisted the services of three clerics of this city to give us a copious supply of the usual fatuous exhortations and maudlin sentimentalism which the death and resurrection of Jesus are supposed to symbolize.

In the issue of *The Times of India* of the 8th April last, the three clerics gave their messages. The first by the Right Rev. Richard Dyke Acland, the Anglican Bishop of Bombay, was a short one, but full of the usual insincerity.

The Bishop emphasised that Jesus lives.

He is, of course, sure of that. He came to life again, said the Bishop, to help him and to help you and me. You have only to believe in Jesus and have Jesus in you to feel peace and happiness within yourself and to be sure of eternal salvation hereafter. Jesus, said the Bishop, came to the world to save the world from such horrors as we are passing through now. Such a thing would have been impossible if the people believed in Christ and lived up to the precepts he taught.

One will note the insincerity of such a statement. Surely the Right Rev. R. Dyke Acland must surely know that Jesus is believed to have come to this world to atone for the Original Sin of Man. This, as every body knows, is the first and most important dogma of Christianity. Jesus had to sacrifice himself, so the Scriptures say, to appease his Father who would not be appeased by any other means for the first transgression of man. God wanted a blood sacrifice and nothing but the blood of his son could appease him! I dare say there are many cultured people now-a-days who see in this nothing but a repulsive barbarous idea, borrowed from primitive rites, and many such people who profess Christianity would rather attribute the alleged sacrifice of Jesus for more noble causes than the appeasement of an irate father for a mere trifle.

Jesus could not have had in mind the fact that people who did not follow him faithfully would turn the world 1900 years after him into a hell such as the one we are experiencing now. The world, moreover, has seen many such hells since Jesus died 1900 years ago. This alone might have restrained all these people who talk so glibly that Jesus Christ's mission was to save the World.

The truth is, if the Gospels can be relied upon, that he expected the end of the world soon. He actually predicted that it would come before the generation he was addressing would pass away. His slogan was: "The Kingdom of God is at hand, make haste make repentance." Nothing is clearer than this in the Gospels and

no amount of quibbling can alter the meaning of what Jesus is reported to have said on the subject.

The message of His Grace, Dr. Roberts, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Bombay, was very short and simple. He did not indulge in any false sentimental appeal. One feels that he did not care to commit himself one way or other to any positive statement on the subject. He only alluded to the resurrection of Jesus upon which, he said, his religion is founded. He believed that it is a symbol of victory over death. Why victory over death since death is as natural an event as is birth, one is at a loss to understand.

Anyhow, the good Archbishop did not stress the fact, as so many of his colleagues are fond of doing, that Society would crumble to pieces if people ceased to believe in the resurrection of Jesus and in God.

If Dr. Roberts' message was short and sensible, such was not the case with that of the Rev. Father Gracias which was very long and verbose. It contained a lot of information about God, His likes and dislikes and so forth. One feels that the Rev. Father Gracias is actually more familiar with God than with his next door neighbour. Professor T. H. Huxley truly said that some men know more about God than scientists know about cockroaches.

Father Gracias must have considered the hospitality of *The Times of India* a good and unique opportunity to air his views. Unfortunately he talked a lot of nonsense.

He also drew attention to the fact that this war would have been impossible if people believed implicitly in Jesus Christ. He said that the world is experiencing a crisis today which is unique in history, all due to the fact that most people have lost faith in Christianity. One would think that the world up to recently was a peaceful one and it is only now that we are passing through such awful times because the world has become more materialistic.

(Continued on page 84.)

# PROBLEMS BEFORE RATIONALISTS IN INDIA

By : AKSHAYAKUMAR R. DESAI

I  
**T**O make Rationalist propaganda and educative work productive of tangible large scale results and to elevate the Rationalist Movement to the level of a living force in the social and intellectual life of the Indian people, it is vitally necessary for Rationalists in India to have a concrete conception of the specific problems and tasks confronting them in India. This requires a close study of the vast and complicated structure of modern Indian society, of the numerous religious and non-religious ideological currents which exercise a sway over the mind of the people and of the varied institutions, some ancient and hoary, others recently emerged, existing in the country. Rationalists must further determine the progressive or reactionary role of these ideologies and institutions and attack or endorse them in their propaganda. They must establish points of collision with *the specific type* of institutional reaction and irrationality existing in India and evolve forms and methods of propaganda suited to the *particular* psychology and existing intellectual level of the people. *Then alone*, can their propaganda be understood by the people, the particular group of superstitions holding their mind in bondage exploded, the particular category of institutions stifling their freedom exposed and the spread of Rationalism accelerated among them.

The spread of *general* principles of Rationalism and Materialist Philosophy though of vital value for building up of a scientific world outlook, can form *only a part* of the propaganda and educational activities of Rationalist Associations. This is no doubt indispensable

to create properly-trained theoretical cadres for the Movement from among the intellectuals who form a minority of the population and who alone, due to the cultural advantage, can grasp these profound philosophical principles and concepts. Such training can, however, only be useful to prepare the Leadership of the Movement.

But to extend the influence of Rationalism among the broad sections of the people, the Rationalists must study concretely the specific social structure of the country, the peculiar type of ignorance and superstition rampant among the people, the particular type of reactionary institutions enslaving their mind and smothering their self-expression. Abstract criticism of Religion, superstition or priestcraft *in general* will remain incomprehensible to the people whose cultural level, under the present system, is tragically low. The Rationalists have to expose among the people not religion or superstition in general but those existing *in India*. They have, for instance, to explain the unscientific essence, the irrational conceptual basis of Hinduism, Mahomodenism and other religions and cults which exert almost a universal sway over the mind of the people crippling their creative energy, initiative and truth-detecting power. It is true, that these religions and cults are variants of the same basic error, an unscientific world outlook, but the mechanism of each of these variants has to be studied because, then alone, can appropriate forms of ideological attack on them be evolved and their weight among the people be successfully undermined.

Among various unscientific ideologies

having enormous influence among the Indian people, Gandhism stands in the forefront. It is a powerful though half-veiled religious force in India preventing the growth of a rational understanding of the world, life, society, political and economic problems and processes, social relations, among the people. Gandhi has mystified even such an obviously non-religious thing like politics by injecting it with religion. No religious leader in the past ever achieved such a feat. Gandhi declares that he shapes his political strategy according to the Inner Voice from God. He recommends prayer as an all-powerful weapon to accomplish things. When earthquakes erupt and devastate human life, he tells the victims that their suffering was only punishment meted out to them by God for sins committed in the past. Gandhi has been galvanizing the weakening religious impulse of the Indian people and infecting politics, economics and ethics with the confusing and paralysing power of the religious virus. One of the essential tasks of Indian Rationalism is to expose the ideology of Gandhism which retards the intellectual development of the Indian People

## II

In the study of the institutions, customs, or cultures of a people, the rationalist approach must be synonymous with the historical approach. The rationalist must study the historical conditions under which a reactionary custom, institution or a culture evolved. Then alone, he can grasp the specific historical conditions under which these can vanish. If, for instance, Religion in all its mystical or metaphysical forms, emerged on the basis of man's helplessness and ignorance of the forces of nature and society and to-day persists due to the anarchy in social life and its active spread among the people by privileged social groups with a view to dull their mind, kill their discontent and thereby stabilize their privileged positions, the Rationalist at once realizes that the people can be *completely* freed

from the chains of religion only if social anarchy is replaced by social organization and scientific knowledge brought to them. Again when the Rationalist knows that superstition prospers most where poverty is maximum, that poverty-stricken people are more inclined to lend ears to cock and bull stories of fictitious happiness in a mythical other world told to them by the priests, he is not simply content with refuting the idea of the *afterworld* as an intellectual error but also strives for the removal of the present economic system which breeds ever increasing poverty. He sees deeper and realizes that extreme poverty among the majority of the population provides a *favourable* economic condition for their psychological readiness to listen to the talk of priests who lavishly promise them riches in the next life while reconcile them to their poverty in this life.

So, the task of the Rationalists is not limited to the exposure of the mechanism of particular types of superstition and irrationality, pervading the institutions and culture of a people. They have also to strive for the removal of those social conditions which serve as a fertile breeding ground for irrational modes of thought and action. They should recognize superstition as the symptom of the disease pervading the social organism. As such, while treating this symptom, they should point out and attack the very social conditions which *predispose* people to develop irrational moods and attitudes and surrender their mind to the propaganda of mysticism and other reactionary ideas.

In the same way, the Rationalist should not merely indicate the irrational and oppressive character of a social institution. He should study, point out and stand for the abolition of those economic and historical conditions which brought into life and form the basis of such an institution. For example, let us consider the caste system of the Hindus. It is one of the most irrational and oppressive institutions in India. It throttles freedom of

action of the Hindus in most vital matters like marriage. It straightjackets their thoughts, emotions, impulses. The Rationalist will surely expose the tyranny and irrationality of the caste system. But if he is armed with a historical approach, he will not be satisfied only with this much. He will study the origin of the caste system and discover it in the economic division of prefeudal Indian society based on handicraft and agriculture. He will conclude from this that the destruction of this economic basis of the caste through progressive industrialization of India will work as a powerful disorganizer and solvent of this most rigid and undemocratic social form. He will, therefore, reinforce his campaign of exposure of caste with the demand for increased industrialization of India. He will attack all reactionary economic programmes aiming at perpetuating the economic backwardness on which some of the most reactionary institutions exist and thrive.

Industrialization integrates the nation as one economic unit, builds up national sentiment, undermines narrow, local or communal emotions, gathers people in national and class organizations and steadily breaks up caste and communal social forms resting on the economy of the pre-industrial period. It also brings in its wake scientific and materialist culture of which it is the result.

To take another illustration. Nazi Germany is swept with such irrational ideas as anti-semitism, anti-democracy, anti-Darwinism, barbaric race theory, "woman's place is in the kitchen and maternity hospital", anti-science, except so far as the needs of the Moloch of the military machine requires development of science. The Rationalist making a deeper analysis of the phenomenon, will not stop at exposing the irrationality and even barbarity of some of these concepts. He will realize that in the conditions of crisis of the entire structure of German society, out of sheer despair, the German people became predisposed to believe in such preposterous ideas. The ideological

retrogression of Germany is linked up with the crisis of its social structure. The Rationalist, understanding this connection, will not halt at exposing the unscientific and socially reactionary nature of Nazi ideology, but would trace it to the social system which produces crises and renders the appearance of such forms of cultural reaction unavoidable. He will next suggest the change of the entire social system.

The Rationalist Organizations in Europe could not withstand the onslaught of Fascism and succumbed before the tide of cultural reaction because they did not build up organic alliance with progressive social forces struggling against Fascism. The Rationalists remained isolated groups of scientific intellectuals. This isolation was the outcome of their inability to realize *the social character of ideas and that ideas reflect the interests of definite social sections of the population.*

### III

The Rationalist thus should not merely refute error, expose reaction and propagate scientific views but also fight for the elimination of the social environs where error can thrive and superstition spread and for the creation of a new social environs which, due to its sane, rational arrangement, makes it easy for the people to imbibe scientific culture. Surely, in this, they will come into conflict with those social groups which benefit by the present chaotic social system, which, therefore, always finance the spread of irrational ideas among the people, thus degrading them to a low level of cultural existence and are, further, hostile to the growth of Rationalism. But, in this struggle for a social change, the Rationalist will find allies in progressive social forces which are in open, political and other conflict with reactionary groups. In fact, the best portion of the Rationalists will play the glorious role of the *leaders* of these social forces. They will guide these forces in removing the present irrational social order and be also the architects of the new and rational order and culture.

of the future which will be world-wide and truly human.

#### IV

So Rationalism strikes at and exposes whatever is irrational and therefore socially retrogressive in institutions, social relations, in the cultural life and ideological habits of a people. It wars on superstition preached by reactionary social groups to stabilise their "intellectual" hold over the people and safeguard the material benefits accruing to them by means of this hold. It crusades against social gradations not naturally emerged on the basis of diversity of talent among the individuals comprising a people but based on irrational conceptions of heredity and wealth. It storms the citadel of exclusive privileges, monopolist rights of some to culture and comfort. In the sphere of culture, it attacks ideas which are irrational, because they do not correspond to reality and therefore befog the mind of the people, distort their practical activity, make them capitulate in holy awe to secular or ecclesiastical tyrants, in fact, make them willing dupes of predatory social groups.

Scientific knowledge of natural and social worlds is the inevitable fruitful outcome of a rationalist approach to these worlds. The scientific knowledge when it reaches out to the people, gives them a rational understanding of institutions and events, frees them from mental miasma and in their hands becomes a power to dislodge from authority those who thrive by keeping them ignorant.

But the Rationalist also traces all irrationalities to its social source. He goes to the socio-historical roots of all errors, of all chaining of human mind and body, of all shackling and paralysing of human will and intellect. While exposing an irrationality, he also calls for the removal of those social conditions in which the irrationality, emerged and found nutrition. He is a Doctor curing the disease and not a quack confounding the cure of the disease with the treatment of the symptom.

*(Continued from page 70)*

can cope with the population, the community will never have unlimited food, and some limit will have to be imposed on the number of children to keep the population from exceeding the limit set by the food supply, unless of course, as some people maintain, the birth-rate falls automatically when the standard of living rises. Supposing that it does not fall, people cannot be allowed to breed recklessly, though it is not easy to decide how birth-control is to be imposed on unwilling couples. This is hardly the place to consider that, but as marriage does not serve that purpose, it need not be recognized at all except with a view to bring up children properly. In any case, marriage should not give the two partners any monopoly rights on each other's bodies and should leave them at perfect liberty to follow their own inclinations as regards sex relations. Current sex morals are responsible for more misery in the world than perhaps any other single cause. The two reasons which may have made these restrictions desirable in the past were the fear of pregnancy and the fear of disease, but when it is recognized that pregnancy out of wedlock is no more a crime than within it, and that there are quite effective methods of preventing both pregnancy and disease, these reasons disappear and all the restrictions due to them become utterly unnecessary. One important cause of unhappiness will thus disappear with them.

When the necessities of life are available to everybody without exception, when all facilities for education and development are provided equally for all without consideration of birth or sex, and when it is recognized that no unnecessary restrictions should be imposed on anybody in any matter whatsoever including sex, all the essentials of happiness will have been achieved by the new order and the world will be a much better place to live in after it comes into force, in whatever way it is achieved.



# 11th Annual General Meeting and Dinner of the Rationalist Association of India

THE 11th Annual Reunion of the Rationalist Association of India was held on Sunday, 16th March 1941, at 7-30 p.m. at the Taj Mahal Hotel. It was very well attended and in spite of many absentees the gathering was larger than that of last year.

Among those present were:

Miss Shakuntala Paranjpye, the guest of honour for the evening, Dr. C. L. D'Avoine, Prof. H. V. Hampton, Miss Margaret Benjamin, Prof. & Mrs. S. K. Muranjan, Mr. & Mrs. V. D. Satghare, Dr. & Mrs. H. P. Moolgaokar, Miss Alice D'Avoine, Mr. & Mrs. Kishore Premchand, Dr. M. G. Pardhan, Dr. Geo. Coelho, Dr. S. B. Gadgil, Mr. A. S. Sarela, Prof. R. D. Karve, Mr. & Mrs. A. S. Erulkar, Miss Alice D'Avoine, Miss Passanah, Dr. S. Hurry, Mr. & Mrs. Rovshan Mohamed, Mr. E. D'Avoine, Mr. I. D'Avoine, Mrs. Brendon-Brady, Mr. M. V. Parab, Mr. R. Hurry, Mr. Homi Chinoy, Mr. N. M. Bhatena, Mr. J. I. Samson, Miss Samson, Mr. Mosas Samson, Mr. K.T. Chandy, Mr. B.D. Solomon, Mr. I. Chatterji, Miss Alice D'Avoine, Mr. D. J. Solomon, Mr. Issac Abraham, Mr. E. Benjamin, Mr. Akbar Frosh, Mr. E. M. Jones, Mr. J. Eziel, Mr. Gupta, Mr. S. B. Rath, Mr. Abraham Solomon, Mr. A. Husein and others.

At the meeting preceding the Dinner, the following Office-bearers were elected for the year 1941:

President:—Dr. A. S. Erulkar.

Vice Presidents:—Dr. C. L. C'Avoine,

Mr. R. B. Lotewala.

Hon. Treasurer:—Mr. D. R. D. Wadia.

Jt. Hon. Secretaries:—Mr. Abraham

Solomon,

Mr. A. Husein.

The Secretaries' report for the year 1940 showed an all round improvement in the activities of the Association and also a small increase in the number of members.

The financial position of the Association left much to be desired but it may be noted that the Association had been able to meet the expenses during the year which were more than those of last year due to the increase in activities. On 31st December 1940 The *Reserve Fund* stood at Rs. 700-5-8. *Lecture Fund* Rs. 23/- and a Balance of Rs. 60-2-0.

The necessity for widening the activities of the Association and improving its financial position was felt all round and the new committee was requested to direct its efforts towards that end. The necessity for each member to co-operate actively was also emphasised.

The following resolutions were passed unanimously:—

The Rationalist Association of India is deeply thankful to Mr. R. B. Lotwala for having printed "Reason" for a nominal payment from January 1940 till now and wish to record its appreciation for this generosity shown at a critical moment.

2. This meeting of Rationalists in India views with admiration the courageous efforts of Freethinkers in England to keep aloft the flag of freethought in these difficult times in that country and sends them fraternal greetings meant for freethinkers in England in general and the National Secular Society and its president, Mr. Chapman Cohen.

3. This meeting records its deep concern for the sufferings of Freethinkers and others due to the reign of suppression and tyranny on the Continent of Europe and hopes that the present march of oppression will soon make way for the rebirth of liberty wherever it has been suppressed.

After Dinner Dr. C. L. D'Avoine made the following speech:—

Ladies and Gentlemen.

**A** **NOTHER** year has passed since we last met and a dreadful and sad one it has been. Throughout that time the work of destruction and death which is devastating Europe has gone on unabatingly and there is as yet no prospect that the end is in sight. One would think that our civilization is crumbling to pieces and that the reign of barbarism is returning.

Yet this mighty conflict has raised the hope in many that a new order of things in the world is bound to be established when it ends, and that many will be forced by the awful experiences they have passed through to recognise the delusion under which they have lived and to see the shining light of reason and be guided by it.

Be that as it may, I am, however, rather inclined to agree with Mr. H. G. Wells that a dismal reaction is inevitable after this war, and that this world will again see a revival of dark superstition and irrational beliefs which will prevail, at least, for some time. We are more likely to see broods of devotees and a crop of saints arising, drawing the people more and more into the great illusion than rationalists and philosophers spreading the message of common sense and sane thinking in eager ears the world over. In times of great danger and calamity, such as we are passing through now, people give way to fear and seek the consolation of religion and supernatural help. The priests know this well and they always take full advantage of the situation. As you all know, the clergy in England have not been idle during these stirring times. Their advice to the people how to save themselves is to pray and pray unceasingly and to serve God. God, they assure the public, will protect those who pray. The fact that many churches have been bombed when people were actually assembled in them, in the very act of prayer and most of them killed does not disconcert these priests and

parsons. They can always satisfactorily explain away why God has behaved in this or that manner.

England has already had several days of public prayers by official sanction and each one of which has been followed by terrible disasters for the allies and of triumph for the enemy. If the people were reasonable and thoughtful they might have derived some food for thought in these remarkable coincidences and perhaps doubt the confidence they place in their God. But no; many are convinced that God not only heard their prayer and came to their help, but they say He did manifest himself unto His people by miraculously saving the soldiers at Dunkirk when everything seemed to be lost. The public are referred to the Books of Revelation to understand how mysteriously God works. Such is the power of religious propaganda and the blind belief of people in the supernatural. These calamities instead of making people realize that God is indifferent to this conflict, on the contrary would make it appear that God is no doubt punishing us for our transgressions, yet in the end will help us and make us triumph over the power of darkness. This extraordinary confidence and hope in God reminds one of the women of certain African tribes who say that the more their husbands kick them the more they love them. One has only to read the English papers to realize the utter nonsense and silly stuff that the clergy and other religiously-minded people in England are talking in these days. From some of the highest prelates down to the humblest priests and parsons statements are made which make one wonder whether these people are in their right minds. It is certain that they all rely on the rank stupidity of their hearers, otherwise it is difficult to explain how the people can hear them patiently and do not implore them not to make fools of themselves.

It must, of course, be the same in other countries afflicted by this dreadful war. Only

a few days ago, the Pope of Rome, the Head of the biggest Church in Christendom, addressing the Missionary Students, is reported to have told them that the cause of the War was due to people no longer believing in God, and he exhorted these Missionaries to restore that belief. One is reluctant to believe that the Pope spoke sincerely when he talked in that manner, for how could an educated and sincere man say such absurd things when he must know that the worst wars in history have been religious wars conducted by people who firmly believed in God!

To exhort his Missionaries to restore the belief in God, especially the God taught by Roman Catholicism, is like requesting grown up men to resort again to the game of playing marbles. The Pope evidently does not believe that education has killed the childish beliefs he teaches and that to make enlightened people believe like him is impossible. All the same, we must admit that sound education in the matter of beliefs is not spreading as fast as we would like. In this respect it works slowly and is hampered by all sorts of prejudices. For this reason intolerance and bigotry are still rampant and hence we must be constantly on our guard. I am reminded of this by a recent incident in Bombay. The Editor of the Bombay *Sunday Standard* has recently opened the columns of his paper to the ventilation of heterodox views and began the series by publishing Prof. Julian Huxley's article "Why I Am An Atheist."

It is true that that paper published the article after making an apology for doing so; all the same, some correspondents have already rushed to rebuke the Editor for daring to ventilate Atheistic views and to warn him of the harm that such views have on the world.

A bigot complains that he is horrified that Professor Huxley who, he says, is supposed to be an educated man should insult his Creator so much. Prof. Huxley according to that Christian must be a fool not to see the evidences of the existence of God in Nature. He, the Chris-

tian, sees that plainly and he pities Prof. Huxley for being so blind. Well, the evidences that this benighted Christian sees so plainly are nothing more than some of the arguments of Design which many educated divines themselves, have long ago rejected. Yet, that man is conceited enough to believe that he is very wise and those who cannot believe like him are crazy, wicked and dangerous. He actually goes so far as to say that Atheists are a miserable lot, are murderers and are capable of causing the greatest harm in the world. According to that man the Police should be after us tonight, for he is horrified that Atheistic doctrines should be spread.

Another correspondent of the *Sunday Standard*, a woman, evidently one of those missionary women who have such a fine time in this country, is also horrified that the Editor of the *Sunday Standard* should open his columns to make known atheistic views. According to her also, the views of Prof. Huxley about God were very wicked and caused harm. She is convinced, she says, that people who have not experienced the saving power and grace of Christ are miserable and are capable of doing the greatest harm in the world. To prove this she quotes amply from the Bible. Her letter is, no doubt, silly and contemptible, but people of her type are mischievous and do hinder the work of Rationalism. For one thing, it is they who terrify timid Editors of papers and prevent them from being fair and impartial in their dealings with the other side of the question. After this does any one doubt that the task of Rationalism is terribly difficult and that it will take a long time, a very long time, indeed, to make headway. Just imagine, ladies and gentlemen, the difficult task before us in this country. Only a few days ago, some well-known Indian national leaders among whom were some titled gentlemen, refused to meet at a Conference in Bombay in order to avoid the evil influence of the eclipse, which fell on the day of the Conference.

Ladies and gentlemen, if we have the cause of Rationalism at heart, if we are certain that it will play a salutary part in the new order of things expected, we must be patient and persevering. Religion has had a long start before Rationalism and it is only natural that progress of our cause must be slow and laborious.

Dr. C. L. D'Avoine then requested Miss Shakuntala Paranjpye to speak.

### Miss Shakuntala Paranjpye.

Miss Shakuntala Paranjpye, the guest of honour, then delivered an interesting speech on the rights of woman in society. She said that in the present cry for equality for women is implied a recognition of the necessary but limited right of women to freely participate in all social activities. But, in her opinion, women were superior to and different from men in certain matters and as such should have more rights than men in regard to those matters. The enforcement of a rigid equality between men and women would deprive the latter of some essential rights pertaining to those functions which woman alone is better fitted than men to perform. She asserted that rights must correspond to talents and functions.

She then referred to the popular demand for the abolition of polygamy. In her opinion the numerical proportion between healthy and marriageable men and women was a question to be considered in this connection. The present war is upsetting the existing proportion; but unlike the last war, the present one is exacting a heavy toll of death of women and children as of men. Whatever proportion might result at the end of the war, woman's right to motherhood should not be denied in the name of any traditional view of marriage. She wondered if there was behind the obvious causes of this war a hidden purpose of Nature to pave the way for a society in which there would be a select breeding according to principles of eugenics.

### Prof. H. Y. Hampton.

Prof. Hampton, in a humorous speech, traced the history of modern rationalism in India from the early 19th Century. He reminded the audience of the life and work of David Hare, the great rationalist and pioneer educationist of Bengal, who founded the Hindu Vidyalaya which has today grown up into the

Presidency College of Calcutta. He was a great industrialist but he devoted most of his income to the establishment of an educational institution which spread a rationalist attitude among the young men of Bengal. He had to meet with tremendous opposition from Hindu orthodoxy and from government. The speaker then referred to the life of DeRozzio, Professor of Philosophy at a College in Calcutta in the 19th Century. As a young man of 22 DeRozzio was full of a desire to spread rationalism among the young men of India. As a Professor of Philosophy he put before his students not only the arguments for a belief in the existence of God but also the arguments against such a belief. This excited the fury of religious orthodoxy both in the government circles and among the people and he was promptly removed from his post.

Coming to the present day, the speaker referred to the great work of Dr. R. P. Paranjpye as a rationalist and educationist. The R. A. I., he said, should not confine itself to negative attacks on religion but should launch upon a wide educational campaign for the spread of an attitude of scientific criticism to all branches of human activities.

### Prof. S. K. Muranjan.

Prof. Muranjan dealt with the communal passions and separatist mentality which are gaining ground in this country and he condemned the pugnacity and lust for power of communal leaders. He exhorted the audience to use every opportunity available to proclaim their rationalism. He narrated a personal incident of how he was once called upon to take the oath in a court of law and he refused to take a religious oath. In a country like India where the weight of religious tradition is so heavy, we must proclaim our attitude on every occasion with all the courage of our conviction.

Mr. K. T. Chandy gave a brief speech making some suggestions for strengthening the Rationalist movement in India.

Mr. Abraham Solomon then thanked the guest of honour and the other speakers and expressed the hope that at the next occasion we would meet in greater numbers and happier circumstances.

# Religion In Practice

## CASTE OPPRESSION

The following which appeared in the *Bombay Sentinel* of 17th April will come as an eye-opener to those who think that caste and class tyranny within a "great" religion is a thing of the past. It should also make people realize that superfluous reformist activities and theoretical preaching of brotherly love are of no use. Unless people go to the root of the trouble, the source of fanaticism and false belief and unless people throw overboard the mental attitude which breeds superstition; communal riots and intercaste tyranny will continue to mar the social and political life of the Indian people and lurking assassins in dark lanes become the champions of religion!—*Ed.*

**A** terrible tale of caste oppression practised on the Harijans during which the entire grain stock of the Untouchables is alleged to have been burnt down, the entire population of Harijans in a village forced to seek protection in a single house which was stoned and hammered for full four hours and the inmates, including women and children beaten, comes from one of the villages in Indore State.

The trouble arose out of one of the ugly practice of the Holi festival prevalent for centuries past under which caste Hindus of a village claim it to be their prescriptive right to blind-fold a Harijan woman, dress and adorn her to look like a buffoon, take her round the villages and then to bring her to the centre of the villages for men, women and children of the caste Hindu population to pour hot water on her and take sadistic delight in her sufferings.

The practice has been banned under orders issued by the State, but the ban is still ignored in many of the villages and so the villagers of Kithora and Lohgal this year decided to defy

the ban and see that the Harijans submitted to the practice.

### House Besieged

Accordingly on the Holi day the caste Hindus through the village Patel made the demand on the Harijans to send two specific Depressed Class married women to undergo the ordeal. The Harijans refused to comply with the demand. So the wife of the village Patel was sent out to get hold of the Harijan women and armed with a lathi, it is alleged, she entered the house of one of the "wanted" women and tried to drag her out.

The Patel's wife, apparently, could not cope with the job and reported the matter back to the caste Hindu village who threatened to burn down the Harijan huts and crack a few skulls if they defied the injunctions of religion.

When, in spite of these threats, the Harijans stood fast by their determination higher caste Hindus began collecting sticks and stones to make a general onslaught on the Harijans.

At this all the Harijans of the villages cooped themselves up in a single house with

corrugated sheet roof and walls and shut themselves in.

They could not seek protection in any of the other huts for the simple reason that they were afraid that those huts might be burnt down.

### Fury Let Loose

This roused the caste Hindu fury to white heat. They could control themselves no longer and a regular bombardment of the house was begun. For full four hours stones, big and small, were hurled at the house till the roof and the walls were pounded, till the hands of the caste Hindu population were too tired to hurl stones any longer. Then they turned their attention to the grain stores stocked in an open yard after the harvesting of the crops, and set it on fire, the villagers looking on at the wanton incendiarism with devilish joy.

The fire raged uncontrolled and unmitigated till the entire stock was reduced to cinders and the year's food provision of the Untouchables destroyed.

### Police Appear

By the time the fire was subsiding a few constables from the nearest police chowky came on the scene, surveyed the situation, quietened down the caste Hindu crowd and got the Untouchables to come out of the much-battered house that had saved the lives of not a few.

All this happened between 6 and 12 on the night of the Holi festival.

The next day more policemen, some police officers and others arrived on the scene, and made a panchnama which showed that over 200 large stones—there were hundreds of small ones—lay round about the house, that half a dozen people were injured and that the grain stores had been turned into ashes.

### Deputation to Premier

The whole story was referred to the Harijan Seva Sangh by the local leaders who waited for one month to get some redress.

The Sangh, however, ignored the matter altogether and so it was taken to the Ambedkar Seva Sangh who got together all the facts and sent a deputation to the Prime Minister.

The deputation consisted of Messrs. Krishnarao Rokde and S. R. Masde who were accompanied by Champalal Pira, Unkar Khima, Savant Kalu, Bhera Bhaga, Savant Urmal and Bapu Valga Nanda.

The Prime Minister gave a patient and sympathetic hearing to the deputation and promised to do all he could to redress the grievances of the Harijans.

### General Grievances

Apart from the story referred to above the deputation mentioned the general grievances which deserve mention here.

It was stated that untouchable villagers have to render free and forced labour to the caste Hindu villagers. They are forced to do domestic work like cutting wood, etc., for caste Hindu marriage festivals. They have to go round giving personal invitations during caste Hindu marriages, to carry kitsun light lamps during marriage processions and other ceremonies and festive occasions. All this is done free. If these services are refused the cattle belonging to Harijans are turned out of pastures and grass fields and thus starved.

The Harijans, it is alleged, are not allowed to wear new or even clean clothes. If they purchase new clothes they had to be deliberately dirtied before being put on. This is specially so in the case of women who are forced to remain as dirty as possible.

The Harijans are not allowed to make any sweets and other good preparations on their festive occasions and during weddings. If they do so caste Hindus come round and throw stones and dust in their cooking pots.

Harijan members of Village Panchayats are not allowed to sit on the carpets on which other panchayat members sit. They have to sit on bare ground at a distance from caste Hindu members.

# REVIEWS

*The Contempt of Freedom*, by M. Polanyi, Watts & Co., Fleet St., London. Pp. 116. Sh. 5/- net (1940).

**T**HIS book bears the sub-title, "The Russian Experiment and After" and contains essays on different aspects of Russian Communism, written between 1935 and 1940 and here collected together. In these four essays, the distinguished professor pleads the cause of Liberty as against Collectivism, whether of the German, Italian or Russian variety. This last seemed to have so much attraction for 'the most enterprising and generous minds of the period' that 'progress had become antagonistic to liberty' and the author here seeks to point out the disastrous consequences of this antagonism.

In the first essay on 'The Rights and Duties of Science,' he examines 'the Marxist claims, and those of Prof. Bernal in particular, for a radical reconsideration and readjustment of the duties of science' and points out how disastrous it would be for the progress of science in general to subject it to a central control with the idea of making it subserve the ends of the State. Science can never advance unless research workers are completely free to choose their own lines of research instead of being forced to work on lines prescribed by the State. Such independent research has always proved practically useful in ways which were impossible for the cleverest statesmen to foresee, indeed impossible for the scientists themselves to foresee. He illustrates this by the case of the 'electric discharge lamp' which is now coming into use for the lighting of roads. The theory that led to this was developed between 1900 and 1912 by Planck, Einstein, Rutherford and Bohr, and nobody could have directed them to discover the atomic theory. In spite of this, all scientists were subject to such control, with the single exception of

Pavlov, who was at least free to talk as he pleased, but who was already an old man (77) when Stalin's regime started in 1927. In 1932, a journal was started for the 'application of Dialectical Materialism to physics', and though 'not one in a hundred physicists believed in this nonsense', no one could contradict it publicly. Everything was regulated by the Party, and a 'Journal for Marxist-Leninist Natural Science' was published regularly, till the Party saw the lunacy involved in it, but till then, no scientist in the U. S. S. R. could raise his voice against it.

The second essay on 'Collectivist Planning' contrasts this system with the system of 'Supervisory Authority' which the author would advocate. He points out how central planning signally failed in Russia as regards science and a new system called 'decentralized planning' was introduced in 1932. At the Physico-Technical Institute of Kharkow, for instance, "Each department draws up a plan for work from January 1 to December 31 of each year. The plan is given in detail for each quarter and there must even be a suggestion of what will be done on each day. At the end of each month, the research worker assesses what percentage he has accomplished of his plan. This is usually about 80 to 90 per cent, and the assessments are notably honest." Nobody who has the slightest acquaintance with scientific work will believe that it can be done in this way, but even eminent scientists had to accept the system at least outwardly, however foolish they thought it, if they wished to avoid arrest and deportation, as no evidence was required for condemnation.

Soviet economic planning led to disaster after disaster. 'The attempt to abolish the market broke down in 1921 and commercial life was again restored by Lenin' But as this led to too much liberty, private shops and

enterprises were again destroyed in 1927. But three years after this, a new economic disaster forced Stalin to another retreat. What prevails in Russia at present is no longer Communism, but Socialism. They started with the ideal of 'equal work and equal wages for everybody' and no private ownership, and all this has had to be definitely given up, and private ownership had to be reintroduced, though under the supervision of the state.

The third lecture deals with the details of Soviet economics, and the fourth is on "Truth and Propaganda", showing how a dictatorship can be always represented as perfectly democratic for propaganda purposes, whether the underlying philosophy is Fascist, Nazi or Communist. "Experience shows that a small percentage of party members backed by police can bully the rest of any public meeting composed of indifferent or unorganized opponents of the Government into loyalty, causing the gathering to appear or even to be full of enthusiasm." But all dictatorships ultimately depend on police terror. "Every citizen has to know that he is under surveillance of an armed force wielding arbitrary powers to imprison or execute him on the suspicion of opposing the Government's policy." The legal aspect of Communism as represented in Mr. & Mrs. Webb's "Soviet Communism" may be extremely democratic, while the actual state is ruthless terrorism.

The book will be very interesting reading to anybody who is interested in the development of socialism in Russia. R. D. KARVE

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(Continued from page 72)

Father Gracias does not appear to remember that ever since the introduction of Christianity in Europe that Continent has seen century after century nothing but wars and political unrest.

If this war is more destructive and widespread than other wars, it is because conditions have changed, but the spirit of hatred and malevolence has remained the same throughout.

As a matter of fact, no wars were more bitter and furious than the religious wars which Christians fought among themselves. Father Gracias is a robust believer in religion like most of his countrymen, and we must admire his enormous capacity for belief.

For him, of course, the resurrection story is beyond any doubt, but he must be a very bold man to say that attempts to discredit that story are fanciful hypothesis which are out of date.

Fanciful hypothesis! Well, here is a case of the wish being father to the thought. Such wishful thinking must have relieved the credulous Father a good deal, but will carry no conviction with those who have studied the question thoroughly and impartially. It is an idle story fit for credulous people; for those who accept their religion on trust but do not care to examine it critically.

The resurrection of Jesus rests on no evidence except the discordant accounts one reads in the Gospels. It is strange that not one of the many cosmopolitan citizens of Jerusalem knew anything about it. Fancy such a stupendous and miraculous event as the resurrection of a dead man happening in a city like Jerusalem where there were many Romans, Greeks, Egyptians, Syrians and others, besides Jews, and no one knew anything about it, except a few disciples who do not even agree among themselves of what really happened!

Christianity is losing its hold on well-informed people, because such a story is no longer credited. Father Gracias is only deceiving himself when he talks of fanciful hypothesis which are out of date regarding the reasons advanced for the non-acceptance of that story.



The world must be conquered, not by force  
of arms but by ideas that liberate.

—Emile Zola.

# REASON

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Asstt. Editor :

Abraham Solomon

The writers of the articles in this Journal are themselves responsible for the views expressed and do not implicate the Rationalist Association of India in any way.

We invite contributions of not more than 1,500 words on topics of interest to rationalists. They should be type-written. If not published they will not be returned unless stamps are enclosed.

All contributions, correspondence, press cuttings, journals in exchange, enquiries regarding advertisement rates, etc., should be addressed to Mr. Abraham Solomon, Asstt. Editor, "REASON," 59, Karmant Building, Arthur Road, Bombay, 11.

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## ITEMS OF INTEREST

TO many it may come as a surprise and one sincerely hopes it will be a pleasant one to see *Reason*, the official organ of the Rationalist Association of India, appearing in a new and perhaps a better garb.

If we are to increase its circulation we must set forth to widen its appeal and interest.

In doing so, one need not apprehend that the cause of Rationalism will suffer. On the contrary Rationalism being a process of sound analysis and correct evaluation it should permeate and influence every walk and phase of life. Indeed, it would be a poor apology to express that Rationalism has come into being just because there happened to be Religions and that it should cease to function as soon as the Religions die out. Rationalism is fundamentally a part of civilised life and if we are to admit that humanity is progressing then Rationalism must grow.

Unfortunately in the human mind there is a tendency to evade realities when they happen to be unpleasant. The human mind when conditioned to such a state is just fit and proper to absorb any nonsense that may be offered to it by way of bringing relief. The war unbalances many minds and it is seriously felt that

at present there must be many in Europe who having been smitten with sorrow and suffering, resorting to quacks and charlatans and magic and charms. It is one of the sadder aspects of war that in producing unstability in the human mind it creates a field just ripe for irrational beliefs.

In the surrounding gloom it is happy to note that the ordinary men and women who are actually experiencing the horrors of war realise that there is something radically rotten and corrupt in the present structure of society and international affairs. More and more new ideas and better ideals are being expressed, as reflected through the media of literature, art, and films. Now that the defects of the existing order can be seen through and the conscience of humanity has been aroused will it have the courage, capacity and strength to change it? The answer depends on the present generation. Each one now living in these critical times must make an intelligent decision and acquaint himself with the currents, and under-currents that are shaping the future of humanity.

The war which is occupying the major attention of most people is gradually moving towards the climax. On the one hand is ranged the British tenacity and determination to win and on the other the German strategy and military machine. The British morale is as high as ever in spite of the very hard knocks they have received, and they are far from showing any signs of weakness or disintegration. German strategy is increasingly departing from the traditional method of warfare. They are adopting to a greater extent the psychological technique of lowering the enemy resistance by dissipating their mental condition. The German method is to confound and confuse the enemy so that he becomes incapable of clear thinking and action. The Hess affair is one such incident in point. It has given rise to endless speculation and still remains an unsolved puzzle.

The recrudescence of the communal riots in Bombay confirms the view that only Rationalism can bring harmony amongst the heterogeneous population of India by relegating the place of religion to that of no importance, by synthesising the varying cultures and evolving a new and modern Indian society. That having fixed such a standard all those who have the interests of India at heart should set forth to consolidate and unify it, primarily by eliminating the differences that exist in the nature of language, dress, food and ways of living and secondarily by introducing and adopting newer and better basis for Indian social life.

H.

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# THE TEST OF TRUTH

By R. D. KARVE.

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**I**N view of the controversy about spiritist mediums which continues unabated in the Marathi press, the following extract may interest our readers.

"In 1874 Sir William Crookes published an account of an extended series of observations made in his own laboratory to test the claims of a spiritualist medium that while in a state of trance she was able to produce fully formed materializations of disembodied spirits. Crookes arranged the conditions in a way that, to his own satisfaction, completely precluded both deception and the co-operation of other persons with the medium ; and under these circumstances he reported the following : There appeared a fully materialized figure of a woman some four and one half inches taller than the medium, whose features were larger and complexion lighter, whose pulse-rate by count was 75 while the medium's was 90, who was seen simultaneously with the medium, ' by myself and eight other persons, in my own house, illuminated by the full blaze of the electric light,' and who was photographed by a battery of assorted cameras. Now Crookes was a careful and exact observer, of unimpeachable honesty and great scientific distinction. Did science accept his observations ? It did not. Though he published in technical journals precise accounts of what he had seen and heard, and described in detail his elaborate precautions, and though a quarter-century later, in his presidential address of 1898 to the British Association, he took occasion to say that in all this he had nothing to retract, still in the scientific world, his statements met with an incredulity that was steadfast and all but universal. They still do."

Why was the word of a distinguished scientist doubted in this way ? Was there a

conspiracy against him ? Or does it mean that they refused to accept it because it would upset their preconceived ideas ? It is worth while examining the matter. That certainly does not seem to be the usual attitude of scientists to anything new simply because it is new. If it had been, no progress would ever have been possible in science. What test do people apply then before accepting anything unexpected ? The following line of argument is suggested by the book from which the above extract is taken (*The Nature of Thought*, in two volumes, by Prof. Brand Blanshard, M.A., B.Sc., Ph.D., George Allen and Unwin, Vol. 2, pp. 235-36).

Let us see what answers people give when they are asked why they take a particular statement as true. Some people are content to cite some big name in support, as spiritualists like Mr. Rishi cite the names of people like Crookes and Lodge as authorities because they are well-known scientists. Can this possibly constitute a test of truth ? No rationalist need be told that it does not. Authorities can usually be cited on both sides of a question, and then where are we ? Apart from the consideration of their relative merits, which the man in the street is not able to judge, if big names are cited on one side, they can equally well be cited on the other side.

Some of the people whose names are cited may claim a mystic insight into ultimate truth, but the difficulty remains the same. So long as these mystics do not agree on any given point, the matter remains undecided. Roman Catholics may believe the Pope to be infallible, but other people will not. Even God himself is supposed to have revealed the truth to different religions, and what greater authority can there be for religious people ? But unfortunately these truths revealed to different

religions are not the same and are often contradictory. This does not therefore solve the question.

It may be said that when you have a mystic insight into things, you are in possession of the truth, you need not care what other people think. Gandhi for instance is a mystic of this type, who believes in an 'inner voice' irrespective of what other people think. He may perhaps be justified, but other people are certainly not justified in relying on that inner voice to give them the truth. Even Gandhi is satisfied simply because he despises logic and does not believe in being consistent. But the great mathematician Ramanujan (who did enough mathematical work to get the F. R. S. though he died at 33) was more sensible. Prof. Hardy has put it on record that he believed that a goddess revealed mathematical solutions and formulae to him in his dreams. All the same, he took the trouble to verify his formulae when he got up in the morning. Mathematics is only a form of logic and a logical mind will never rest content with either authority or mystical insight as a test of truth. What did Ramanujan do to verify his formulae? Mathematical verification always means the same thing. You apply the new formula to several concrete cases and see whether there is any contradiction. If there is, you reject the formula, otherwise you try to prove its general truth. It is quite true that Ramanujan did discover formulae which were true in spite of the fact that he could not prove them. This is mathematical intuition, but the results are never accepted by scientists without proof.

Another form of answer which people frequently give is that you do not require a proof when you see that a thing is self-evident. For instance I see a crow sitting on a branch. It is quite plainly visible and anybody else can see it like me. What further proof do I need? Even that is not so evident as it looks. How do I know that it is a crow? Because I have seen crows before and have a correct idea of its general appearance. But in that case,

somebody else who is not as clever may easily mistake some other black bird for a crow. And if such a mistake is possible, the thing is no longer self-evident, which is also proved by the fact that I give reasons for believing it, so that I do apply some kind of test after all even when I say that a thing is self-evident.

There are of course other cases which may seem still more self-evident, such as  $2+2=4$ . Is this really self-evident? Suppose somebody says that this is not true. Then the person who makes the statement  $2+2=4$  will at once start to prove it with the help of pebbles or some other things. Another reason may be given that if we do not admit the truth of this, our whole system of numeration will tumble down, which is in fact what the proof with pebbles also means. That system has been adopted for our convenience and if you accept the system, you have to accept also that  $2+2=4$ .

Again, as Bertrand Russell says, there are degrees of self-evidence. "If we consider at random a number of propositions that have been accepted as self-evident, we do seem to find these gradations. 'The sun is rising'; 'the Venus de Milo is a more perfect work of art than the Laocoon'; 'ex nihilo nihil fit' (out of nothing, nothing comes); 'cruelty is wrong'; 'two parallel lines cannot enclose a space'; 'a proposition cannot be both true and false'.....The judgment about the sun, taken in earlier times as self-evident, is now rejected flatly; the judgment about the statues would be made, one suspects, with great uncertainty; the others would probably all be accepted (Hitler would probably not accept the one about cruelty. R. D. K.) But here again, I do not think their certainty would be rated equal; it may be hazarded that most people would regard this as gradually increasing and as reaching a maximum at the end in the law of contradiction.

If we analyse these statements and their degrees of certainty, we find that the first statement is at variance with our present knowledge of astronomy, since it is the earth

(Continued on page 91)

# HYDRA OF PAKISTAN

By **AKSHAYAKUMAR R. DESAI.**

**T**HE entire conception and scheme of Pakistan advanced by the reactionary leadership of the Muslim League and now adopted as "an article of faith" of the League at its Madras Session, strikes at the grand historical process of national unification of the congeries of numerous social groups which inhabit India, going on at an accelerated rate, for the last more than a hundred years. Pakistan aims at reversing this forward process and like all unhistorical attempts to put the clock of human progress backward, it is doomed to failure.

Temporarily, however, the Pakistan propaganda can confuse, disorganize and retard the national unification tendency of the Indian people. It is the supreme *national* duty and task of all progressive elements in the country aspiring and striving for the building up of a united political India, to combat Pakistan propaganda and counteract the machinations of reactionary anti-national leaders like Jinnah, as they should also smash similar attempts to disrupt the growing national unity of the Indian People, of pan-Hindu propagandists like Savarkar.

Powerful historical forces have been working for over a century making for the unity of the Indian People. Among these forces which provide the material basis of the edifice of the political, administrative and finally cultural unity of India, the growth of Industry, wide transport ramifications through the country and the conversion of agricultural economy from its self-sufficient village basis into a part of the national economy have been of decisive importance. These developments have transformed India into a single economic unit, made the populations of different provinces residually mobile and not fixed, disorganized and weakened past territorial and communal groupings of the people and created their new groupings. Even on the basis of foreign domination and

within Imperialist forms, they have integrated the Indian people economically, politically and administratively. Mass migrations of people, not because they are Hindus or Muslims, fleeing from religious terror, but because they are impoverished peasants, unemployed workers, or ruined artisans, Hindus and Muslims alike from province to province, from one industrial centre to another, are occurring. Due to the industrial development, new social camps arise in the cities, the camp of workers and that of capitalists. And in the rural area the chronic, agrarian crisis and the resultant impoverishment of the peasants undermine the old seemingly fundamental social division of the people into Hindus and Muslims and divide them into toiling farmers on one hand and exploiting landlords and usurers on the other, irrespective of their communal affiliations.

The economic unity brought about by the growing industrialization, extensively ramified transport, and the conversion of the self-sufficient village into a production unit of a national economy combined with the presence of foreign domination, have been progressively building up a powerful *national sentiment* among the Indian People, Hindus and Muslims alike. An Indian is increasingly feeling as an Indian, as a worker, a farmer, a clerk, an industrialist, a banker, a radio-operator and diminishingly as a Hindu or a Muslim. The Indian People are more and more uniting as a single unit to end their political subjugation and secure Independence. The workers, Hindus and Muslims, unite in their trade unions. The peasants, Hindus and Muslims, aggregate in their peasant organizations; students, Hindus and Muslims, muster in their student unions. Industrialists, Hindus and Muslims, build up their federations of Industries. Merchants rally into Chambers of Commerce.

The growth of such gigantic organizations as All-India Trade Union Congress, All-India Kisan Sabhas, All-India Students' Federation, All-India Women's Conference, Chambers of Commerce and unions of Industrialists and also the non-Communal Indian National Congress consisting of both Hindus and Muslims, eloquently prove that the Indian People are being organized on national, non-communal lines.

The present political and administrative unity of India, corresponding to her economic unification, due to the introduction of the capitalist economic forms by Britain for the economic exploitation of India, had been brought about by Britain for Imperialist motives. Again, to staff her administrative and economic system she had to introduce an educational scheme which with all its faults remains secular and non-communal, in refreshing contrast to the communal schools run by Hindu and Muslim Organizations. Thus Britain played the role of a unifier of India, *though this unification is existing on Imperialist basis, within Imperialist forms and serving Imperialist interests.*

The task of the Nationalist movement is to strike at the Imperialist form and framework within which the political unity of the country has been achieved, but not at the unity itself which represents a historical gain and advance over the unified India of pre-British period. It should critically carry over this achievement under the Imperialist rule in the form of a united political India, casting aside only its imperialist form.

The sinister, anti-national and communal scheme of Pakistan, however, aims at the destruction of the very unity itself. It wants to transform India from a living political unity into a mangled corpse. It is a diabolical scheme to destroy the growing fraternal union of the Hindus and the Muslims to secure political freedom and build up a common social and cultural life.

It even strikes at the noble dream and aspiration of such great Muslims of the past

as Akbar and Kabir, who in their life-time strenuously strove to create a united India but due to historical obstacles could not realize it.

Now, when the conditions for such a unification have matured and even the process started, the hydra of communalism begins to lift its head and spouts from its reactionary mouth poisonous fumes to blast this growing unity.

The task of the Indian Nationalist, Hindu or Muslim, is to pulverize at the very outset this scheme of fragmenting the living body of India, before it poisons the consciousness of the Muslim population and before the latter are successfully duped into supporting it by the leaders of the Muslim League who can thrive only on reaction. To fight communalism in its latest, most dangerous and ugly form, viz., the scheme of Pakistan, is an integral part of the movement for national emancipation.

The national unity achieved by the Indian People, even on the present level, but now threatened by the activities of anti-national disruptors and arch-communalists like Jinnah and Savarkar, should be guarded as the apple of his eye by every Indian who desires national Independence.

This unity of the Indian People has grown and been reared on generations of selfless and strenuous political toil of noble Indian, Liberals and Leftists alike. It is a pearl forged in the furnace of great and heroic suffering of thousands of martyrs, the best sons and daughters of India, whose hearts were vibrant with the single emotion of national unity and freedom and who consecrated their precious life blood to achieve that unity and freedom.

This unity is now menaced from reactionary communal forces which strive to galvanize into life the latent communal impulses of the people, transform India into the amphitheatre of communal strife and have for their

aim a dismembered India divided into belligerent groups of sovereign Hindu and Muslim States.

National Unity is the supreme weapon of the Indian People to achieve national freedom. It is the objective expression and result of the growth of national emotion and collaboration. By kindling communal sentiments, the leaders of the Muslim League and Hindu Mahasabha, thwart the further growth of this national emotion and collaboration and threaten to destroy the already achieved spirit of national unity among the people. They thus stand in the way of the national unity of the Indian People, the indispensable pre-requisite and weapon of national freedom. By preventing the amalgamation of the Indian People into a single political force which alone can end foreign rule, they are objectively helping the continuation of that rule. They are thereby exposing themselves as obstacles on the road to independence.

Unless communal sentiment disappears or recedes in the background, no national emotion, unity or collaboration of all Indians can emerge. Without this emotion, unity and collaboration, national liberation is impossible.

In fact, even to realize the reactionary objective visualized in the Pakistan Scheme viz., that of an India divided into two groups of sovereign autonomous States, Hindu and Muslim, it is necessary that Independence implying the disappearance of British domination in India, must be won. It can be won only by a united national effort which can be organized only by liquidating all communal discords and separatisms in the country. The authors of the Pakistan scheme like the leaders of the Hindu Mahasabha are on the contrary sharpening the communal animosities and appealing to the anachronistic egoisms of the people. They thereby only stand in the way of building of a national organization and all-national effort to win freedom.

The Communalist not only cannot create any sovereign State, either Hindu or Muslim,

but by obstructing the mobilization of all Indians into one national organization and movement, by splitting the people into unreal anti-national hostile camps, they are only helping to preserve and stabilize British domination in India.

*(Continued from page 88)*

that moves, not the sun ; the one about the statues is a matter of taste and judgment, which are largely individual ; the third is guaranteed by physical science, and so it should be perfectly certain, but for some religions that believe that God created the world out of nothing ; the next is a judgment depending on the experience that cruelty never does any good and certainly does harm ; the next one is mathematically true of real, Euclidean space ; and the last one is the fundamental rule of logic on which all reasoning depends. This shows that we do not accept any statement as true unless it has the support of a system of knowledge, or at least is not contrary to any established truths. That is how in fact we apply the last statement that a proposition cannot be both true and false. But what if anybody denies this fundamental law of logic ? We shall consider this in the next article.

*(To be concluded).*

*(Continued from page 96)*

beautiful in humanity itself. This is, to be sure, a more difficult but an incomparably more worthy task. After religious teachers accomplish the refining process indicated, they will surely recognize with joy that true religion has been ennobled and made more profound by scientific knowledge.

The further the spiritual evolution of mankind advances, the more certain it seems to me that the path to genuine religion does not lie through the fear of life, and the fear of death, and blind faith, but through striving after rational knowledge.

In this sense, I believe that the priest must become a teacher if he wishes to do justice to his lofty educational mission.—*Hindustan Standard.*

# ASTROLOGY A GIGANTIC FRAUD

*By J. M. JONES.*

**I**T is incredible that in our age of science the silly hoax known as Astrology—a superstition surviving from the dark days of mankind's mental infancy when everyone thought the earth a flat and fixed body, should find believers. Yet it is amazing in the extreme that a large majority of our educated people and even of Europe and America, though the number there has steadily been dwindling with the advance of scientific thought and inquiry, believe in it.

None despises the Babylonian or Assyrian pioneers of astrology who, in fact, were the pioneers of modern astronomy just as the medieval alchemists were the pioneers of modern chemistry. Astrology began thousands of years ago in the attempt to link up happenings on the earth with those in the sky. It led to the keeping in Babylon and other cities of what is now Iraq, and perhaps also in India of exact records of eclipses and other celestial events which have been of the greatest use to modern astronomers. They identified the planets with their pagan gods believing the planets had powers similar in character to those attributed to the gods whose names they bore. Today probably not even the most ignorant astrologers believe that Jupiter, Venus, Mars, and the other pagan gods ever existed except in mythology. Nevertheless they ask us to believe that large chunks or gaseous matter, floating in space millions of miles away, somehow exercise influence on us because they are identified with names of characters in fairy tales! Would it be a greater absurdity to say that riding in a car named Venus would insure success in love? If we are to believe that the influences of a mere mass of matter affects human character, then certainly the Taj Mahal Hotel building would have vastly more effect on people in Bombay than would a planet millions of miles away.

The astrologers contend that your character is determined by certain planets, selected according to their position at the time of your birth. But thousands of people are born everyday at the same hour and yet no two of these have the same character and abilities, or achieve equal success in life. If accurate account is available, believers in astrology will, perhaps, be shocked to find that others born at the same moment as the Aga Khan or the Nizam living in poverty. Identical twins often turn out quite differently. Even if we are affected by any influence of the heavenly bodies, why lay so much stress on planetary arrangement at the moment of birth? Why not at the time of conception? If you believe the time of birth is important, then you must believe that a physician changes a child's whole future when he hastens birth for the benefit of the mother.

Inasmuch as few people have any record of the exact hour of birth, astrologers use this lack of definite information as an excuse when their predictions prove inaccurate. In order to cast a horoscope you have to know the positions of all the planets at the time of birth. Indeed for "accurate" prediction the exact hour is needed. Each planet is supposed to have a good, bad or neutral influence. And the sky is divided up into "houses" concerned with various aspects of human life. Thus if at the time of birth Saturn and Mars are in conjunction in the "House of Death" you are likely to meet with an early and violent death. A given day is or is not lucky for a person whose birth hour was known, according to very complicated rules. These rules are supposed to embody the wisdom of the ancient Chaldeans.

## URANUS & NEPTUNE

Two events alone in astronomical history should reveal to the most credulous the



charlatanry in astrology. Just when astrologers had all the planets' administrative chores neatly distributed, the astronomer Herschel discovered Uranus. Then in 1846 Neptune turned up. Evidently for centuries Uranus and Neptune had been loafing along taking no part in directing human affairs though each was bigger than Mercury, Mars and Venus combined !

The wise men of the East had never discovered them, and the attempt to fit them into a horoscope is like putting a motor car into a coat of arms. Yet Western astrologers, like theologians who try to square evolution with the seven-day account of creation by stretching the seven days to seven epochs, soon found congenial jobs for the two planets. In a popular book by the late Evangeline Adams of the United States famous for making astrology pay, we find that Uranus rules the railroads and Neptune governs aviation !

Compare such arbitrary statements with scientific methods for arriving at facts. When William Herschell discovered Uranus he demonstrated exactly how he had done it and gave a reasonable explanation of why no one else had found it. Consider the task that would have confronted Mrs. Adams had she tried to demonstrate the influence of Neptune on aviation ! Science takes nothing for granted, accepts nothing that cannot be proved. If an astronomer tells you that the sun is at a certain distance from the earth he can show you exactly how he finds that out.

### SCIENTISTS' CONTEMPT

During the last 300 years, not one recognised scientist anywhere in the world has professed belief in the slightest connection between the stars and man's destiny. The only feeling scientists have about astrology is one of disgust that in a nation of free schools such hocus-pocus should have so many believers. Yet some of the astrologers call their profession. "Scientific astrology" and brazenly pretend to foretell the future, to interpret character, to detect special abilities solely

from a study of the relative positions of the stars and planets. And thousands of people who ought to know better actually consult them on all sorts of business and personal problems. Countless magazines devoted entirely to this form of humbug are sold in bookstalls. Most of the patter in newspaper astrology columns of our unfortunate country is of such obvious banality that one shudders to think of the mentality of those who take it seriously.

A typical article in one of the magazines, giving a "forecast for those born in October 24 to November 23" contains such gems as this: "*Uranus in the seventh house, from which he sends you the vibration that is fundamental in your life, causes much of the excitement of your life to proceed from your contacts with other people.*" This is the sort of guff, endlessly repeated, with which astrologers impress their prey. Even more serious is the danger that the innate commonsense of readers and their natural desire to know the true from the false may be dulled by this constant barrage of unscientific thinking. Most people who consult astrologers apparently believe that after they have inquired about their future there is nothing else to be done. It requires less effort to go to an astrologer than to act constructively. Reason won't help those who thus want to be fooled. But others should remember that every scientific fact can be demonstrated while no proof in support of astrology can be demonstrated.

If there is any truth in astrology, astrologers must be able to predict at least important world events like the present war, the disappearance from the world of several European nations beginning with Poland, the exit of monarchs, &c. If the world was aware of any such astrological predictions of the war breaking out on 1st September 1939, the last week of August need not have been spent in such feverish anxiety by people all over the world. Did any astrologer predict the Soviet-German non-aggression pact which came as a shock to the entire world. If Polish astrologers could have known from the horoscopes of

their young men that thousands were going to die in the first week of September in Warsaw they could surely have known that war was imminent. If Cheiro had foreseen, as some assume, the war breaking out, why did he not inform the world about it? To stretch out and interpret some of his vague utterances concerning international affairs to coincide with the war is as crude and clumsy as one of the revivalist evangelist's efforts to connect passages from the "Book of Daniel" or "Revelations" with present day events. After some years someone will publish a book purporting to be Cheiro's prediction of world war No. 2, and there will be an army of gullible people to believe it.

### QUETTA EARTHQUAKE

One astrologer told me of certain ancient manuscripts still preserved somewhere in a South Indian temple which contains all world events to come till eternity. Yet no astrologer in this country has been able to predict Quetta and Bihar earthquakes. A Quetta astrologer could, from the horoscopes of some of the citizens, he may undoubtedly have cast, easily have foreseen that all of them will meet with sudden death on a particular night. Then why did he not anticipate the calamity and warn the Government of India about it?

However all that may be, astrologers and palmists are very useful to the cause of capitalism. They help to persuade people that their destinies are outside their control. And of course this is true as long as enough people believe it. But if enough people learn how the joint fate of us all can be altered as is being done in Soviet Russia, things begin to happen which mean the end of capitalism as well as astrology and palmistry.

### BOOKS

All books published by Messrs. Walts & Co. and the Pioneer Press, London, are available through the Rationalist Association of India, but we regret that due to the war we are unable to meet orders for literature promptly, however we hope to avoid delay as far as practicable.

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## R. A. I. NEWS

Due to the communal disturbances in the city for more than a month past it has been impossible to have any activities of the R. A. I. Even the publication of Reason is greatly hampered. However there have been several informal meetings among active members and it is intended to launch our activities as soon as the city comes back to normal.

From the speeches at the last General meeting and also from personal talks with some members it seems that many of them have several suggestions to make as regards the activities of the R. A. I. which would greatly help in furthering the cause of Rationalism. We intend to have a meeting of all members where everyone will be allowed about five minutes each to put some concrete suggestions before the gathering. We hope our members outside Bombay will also send us their suggestions which are always welcome.

It is encouraging to note that in spite of the disturbing times friends are making efforts to get new members and as a result our membership is steadily increasing. The acknowledgements of donations below also show that there are people who do not need vague promises of tenfold rewards in a world "somewhere beyond nowhere" to be generous. It is the encouraging support of such loyal friends that inspires us to carry on in spite of heavy odds.

We gratefully acknowledge the following renewals and new membership subscriptions :

"Doubt" Rs. 5 ; Mrs. E. Wingrove, Rs. 5 ; Justice K. C. Sen, Rs. 5 ; Z. W. Mahomed, Rs. 5 ; P. N. Sinha, Patna, Rs. 5 ; Dr. R. P. Paranjpye, Poona, Rs. 5 ; Dr. M. G. Pradhan, Rs. 5 ; Kishore Premchand, Rs. 5 ; D. S. Tanavde, Ahmedabad, Rs. 5 ; Prof. H. V. Hampton, Rs. 5 ; Dr. G. V. Dravid, Rs. 5 ; Lt.-Col. O. B. R. Dickey, Kashmir, Rs. 5 ; J. Ezekiel, Rs. 5 ; J. B. H. Wadia, Rs. 5 ; Ardeshir K. Irani, Rs. 5 ; Rusy R. Patel, Rs. 5 ; J. N. Patuck, Rs. 5 ; Prof. D. K. Karve, Poona, Rs. 5 ; J. F. Vapilvala, Bulsar, Rs. 5.

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Prof. D. K. Karve, Poona, Rs. 5 ; Lt.-Col. O. B. R. Dickey, Kashmir, Rs. 5 ; J. N. Patuck, Rs. 5 ; J. F. Vapivalla, Bulsar, Rs. 2.

### Subscriptions to Reason

Ramanlal L. Kshatriya, Rs. 2 ; T. N. Ramachandran, Re. 1.

## PARTY TO. DR. S. K. MURANJAN

On Sunday 11th May, members of the R. A. I. entertained Dr. and Mrs. S. K. Muranjan at tea at the residence of Dr. C. L. D'Avoine when a large number of ladies and gentlemen were present. Among them were Dr. A. S. Erulkar, Dr. S. B. Gadgil, Mr. and Mrs. G. Hari, Miss Irene D'Avoine, Mr. and Mrs. R. Mohamed, Mr. Eugene D'Avoine, Miss C. Seldon, Miss Alice D'Avoine, and many others.

Mr. Abraham Solomon in a brief speech congratulated Dr. Muranjan on behalf of the Association and those present on his being awarded the D.Sc. Degree by the University of London. It was a matter of pride to all members of the R. A. I. to know that one who is a keen and enthusiastic Rationalist and a member of the Executive Committee of the R. A. I. should be the recipient of this well deserved honour.

Dr. Muranjan, replying, thanked the Association and those present for the gesture of appreciation and expressed regret that he was shortly to leave Bombay for Dharwar where he had been transferred.

Those present passed a very pleasant and social evening, some younger members kept the gathering lively with humorous skits and tricks.

# WHAT'S WRONG WITH RELIGION?

—PROF. ALBERT EINSTEIN

*(Condensed from an address to the Conference on Science, Philosophy and Religion, New York)*

**D**URING the youthful period of mankind's spiritual evolution, human fantasy created gods in man's own image, who, by the operations of their will, were supposed to determine, or at any rate to influence, the phenomenal world. Man sought to alter the disposition of these gods in his own favour by means of magic and prayer.

The idea of God in the religions taught at present is a sublimation of that old conception of the gods. Its anthropomorphic character is shown, for example, by the fact that men appeal to the Divine Being in prayers and plead for the fulfilment of their wishes.

Nobody, certainly, will deny that the idea of the existence of an omnipotent, just and omni-beneficent personal God is able to accord man solace, help and guidance ; also, by virtue of its simplicity the concept is accessible to the most undeveloped mind.

But, on the other hand, there are decisive weaknesses attached to this idea in itself, which have been painfully felt since the beginning of history.

For example, if this Being is omnipotent, then every occurrence, including every human action, every human thought, and every human feeling and aspiration is also His work ; how is it possible to think of holding men responsible for their deeds and thoughts before such an Almighty Being ?

In giving out punishment and rewards, He would to a certain extent, be passing judgment on Himself. How can this be combined with the goodness and righteousness ascribed to Him ?

The main source of the present-day conflicts between the spheres of religion and of science lies in this concept of a personal God.

It is the aim of science to establish general rules which determine the reciprocal connexion of objects and events in time and space.

For these rules, or laws of Nature, absolutely general validity is required—not proven. It is mainly a programme, and faith in the possibility of its accomplishment in principle is only founded on partial successes. But scarcely any one could be found who would deny these partial successes and ascribe them to human self-deception.

To be sure, when the number of factors coming into play in a phenomenological complex is too large, scientific method in most cases fails us. One need only think of the weather, in which case prediction even for a few days ahead is impossible.

To be sure, the doctrine of a personal God interfering with natural events could never be ' refuted,' in the real sense, by science, for this doctrine can always take refuge in those domains in which scientific knowledge has not yet been able to set foot.

But such behaviour on the part of the representatives of religion would not only be unworthy but also fatal. For a doctrine which is able to maintain itself not in clear light but only in the dark will, of necessity, lose its effect on mankind, with incalculable harm to human progress.

In their struggle for the ethical good, teachers of religion must have the stature to give up the doctrine of a personal God, that is, give up that source of fear and hope which in the past placed such vast power in the hands of priests.

In their labours they will have to avail themselves of those forces which are capable of cultivating the good, the true, and the

*(Continued on page 91)*

# PASSING OF THE GODS

By **CHAPMAN COHEN**

(Reproduced from the *FREETHINKER*.)

## Evidence and Belief

ONE of the strangest of delusions, carefully cultivated, is that mankind has always been in search of a God. It would be nearer the truth to say that man has always been engaged in either dodging or getting rid of gods. It would be the exact truth to say that man has made gods by regiments and slain them by battalions. The curious thing is that those who tell us that man can find no peace until he has discovered God, also inform us that the evils of to-day are due to the fact that man has forgotten God. Really, when a man spends a large part of his life in finding something, he does not easily lose it, unless he discovers that when found it is of little or no use to him. And up to the present no one has been able to show that a man who has not found God, or who lost him again, is any worse off than the man who has found God, holds on to him, and behaves as though he is in constant fear that someone will take God away from him. And, once, found, God has to be guarded from assault in every possible way. There must be, when possible, laws to protect him against assault, he must be forced upon children because every one of God's agents is fearful of their chief running against the god-less adult. Thousands and thousands of paid advertisers are continually telling the world that they must have God, and year by year there goes on a decrease of those who believe in him.

After all man owes, even in the Bible, little of civilization to his gods. God made man naked, and he had to provide himself with clothing. He left him ignorant and he had to risk damnation to find out good and evil. Where God left a swamp human ingenuity had

to make it suitable for habitation. God left the world plastered over with disease germs, and man was left to discover how to protect himself against them. Civilization is a human product, not a heavenly one. When a parishioner was proudly showing his vicar that he was growing beautiful flowers where was formerly useless land, the Vicar remarked, "Well, you must thank God for the land, at any rate," "Maybe," replied the man, "but you should have seen the state of it when I took it in hand."

## Our Primitives

It is not unimportant to remember that mankind did not begin to believe in gods without having what was considered satisfying evidence that they existed. The evidence was not of the kind that would satisfy the modern mind, but it was there, and its nature and quality is well known to those who will take the trouble to consider it. All the evidence there was, or is, for the existence of gods is with us, but it would no more satisfy a civilized man to-day than would an old village legend prove the truth of old women flying through the air on broomsticks. Neither was the evidence of the kind that is carefully collected and deductions then made with care. But belief of any kind is impossible without there being something in the nature of evidence. The evidence of which a belief is the expression may be of the kind that we consciously arrange in logical order; it may be based on little better than prejudice, but belief must be based upon what is accepted as facts of experience. Even the beliefs of a dipsomaniac rest on what are to him factual experiences.

It is sometimes argued that the belief in gods is universal. That may be admitted, but with qualifications. For the fully-fledged God represents a secondary stage of man's development; there is an earlier stage from which the idea of god is precipitated. There is evidence that there are tribes of men without the belief in gods, but there is not known any body of people who are without the raw material from which the gods come. Years ago there existed a controversy as to whether man was originally an Atheist or a Theist. The discussion was futile; at most it was a war of words, and answered to no relevant facts. Freud called the belief in God the history of an illusion, but illusions have their own class of facts from which they emerge. The belief in gods is one of the greatest illusions of man, but illusions have an origin, a history and a development. To the genuinely scientific investigator illusions deserve as careful a study as repetitive facts. When a man says, I am not concerned with your illusions but only with your facts he is advertising his unfitness as an investigator. For "facts" cover the whole world of human experience. It is the relevance of given "facts" to tested experience that is of importance. The visions of a man with a mind deranged are as important to a physician as are the reactions of a man in perfect bodily and mental health. Everything depends upon the nature of the facts.

### Gods

There is to-day no mystery concerning the nature of the "facts" on which the belief in gods is based. God-making is not to be placed along with things the secret of producing which is unknown. God-making is still going on among primitive peoples, and an examination of the primitives in our midst will often bring us near to the mental conditions to which the gods owe their being. The whole process from the making of a god, to the death of a god, and the establishment of a philosophic Atheism can

now be studied as biologists study the evolution of a special animal form. As I have so often said, the question of whether God exists is scientifically out of date. Merely to set the question is to ignore completely the whole trend of modern anthropology. The real question of to-day is not "Does God exist?"—that is a position taken up by the B.B.C. primitives and parsons. The scientific question is, "What precisely were the conditions under which the gods came into existence, what are the conditions of their perpetuation, and what are the causes of their decay and disappearance?"

From the modern point of view our primitive ancestors were wrong in the conclusions they drew from certain experiences, but given the facts as they saw them the conclusions reached were logical enough. They had in a world in which the gods ran riot—semi-gods and full-fledged ones were all around. They were responsible for all that happened. Of course man did not need to have advanced very far from the animal world to recognize that some effort of his own was necessary to get food, to capture game, to defeat his enemies, and so forth. But he still looked to his gods as being necessary to his success in any or all of these directions. And one has only to remember that to-day we have official thanksgivings to God for a good harvest, or for winning a war, or for recovery from a disease, to realize that we have amongst us millions of minds who are in these respects not substantially different from our very, very, remote ancestors. There is no essential difference between King George leading his people to a "sacred" building to induce God by prayer and semi-magical ceremonies to give us victory over Germany, and a primitive chief leading his tribe to a "sacred" forest clearing to implore his gods to help them realize their desires. There is no real difference in substance between a religious oath in a court of law, or the

religious oath taken by a Member of Parliament, and the trial by ordeal, which was essentially calling on God to help man passing through the prepared ordeal which was to demonstrate his integrity or prove his innocence. It is a conventional act when our Prime Minister appeals to God to give his people victory in the war ; although, if Mr. Churchill had to decide between God's help and that of the United States, there is little doubt as to the direction of his choice.

### The Decay of the Gods

But there are important differences between primitive man and his gods, and that of civilized man and his gods. Primitive man had no doubt as to the existence of his gods. Civilized, educated, man is willing at the most to let it go as a mere hypothesis. The existence of the gods of primitive man is questioned by none. The gods were there, beyond doubt, and had to be reckoned with. They did not play hide and seek, revealing their presence to one here and concealing it from one there. In the early stage the gods are there for everyone to recognize, and woe to those who do not observe them. In the last stage of all we meet the gods in the defence phase of their existence, and the distinction is as great as a right which is unchallengeable compared with one that is not recognized without discussion. People never begin to look for God until they are uncertain of his existence. Primitive man may have run the risk of offending his gods, but he never questioned that they were there. In the hey-day of their existence the gods had not to meet disbelief. They needed no defence. That is possible only in an age of at least nascent disbelief. There is no paradox in the statement that the need for proof of the existence of the gods is a mark of their decline. Every

priest knows this, although few will admit it openly. But they do admit it in their very defences. The priest talks of the sin of unbelief but the responsibility for disbelief in their existence lies with the gods themselves. If the gods would have their existence recognized they should so act that no one can doubt it. If they would have men thank them for their help they should make that help patent. As it is, even the defenders of God admit by their elaborate arguments that there is really room for doubt. The pressing need for evidence of the existence of God is an undeniable admission that this existence is open to question. We do not need external evidence that the sun shines, that the wind blows, that love and hate exist. The age of evidence for the existence of God is also the age of the decline of the belief in their being.

Generally speaking the more the gods are discussed the smaller their importance. That, too, is almost axiomatic. Discussion has its place among things that are doubtful. We do not debate certainties. In his suggestive work, *Physics and Politics*, Walter Bagehot says, dealing with the situation in Greece (the country that gave democracy to the world), that the very fact of putting a subject up for discussion admits the possibility of being wrong ; and a series of discourses on the lines of the famous, " Oh God, if there be a God, save my soul, if I have a soul, from hell, if there be a hell, Amen, if necessary", is enough to turn a religious service into a pantomime. In Christianity there is no advice such as Blessed are they that examine and ask for proof, and they who decline to believe in the absence of proof. And in the New Testament we are told that Jesus could work no miracles where there was no belief. That rule applies to all miracles at all times and to all religions. The gods begin

their existence as a certainty, they proceed as a probability, and end as a discarded hypothesis.

### The Irrelevancy of Gods

Without saying it in so many words the whole of modern scientific thought proclaims that the hypothesis of God is useless. It does nothing; it explains nothing. There are statesmen who believe in God, so are there scientists, and philosophers, and sociologists. What reference has "God" to the real work of any of these? There is still a chaplain in the House of Commons, and there is a Bench of Bishops in the House of Lords. But a man may take his seat in the Commons without a religious oath, and his word of honour is counted as equal in value to "So help me God" of the Christian, and it is certain that the Speaker would rule out of order any attempt made by a Christian Member who said that a Freethinker or an Atheist could not properly discharge his duties because of his want of be-

lief in God. And in the House of Lords the sole function of the Bishops is to safeguard the interests of the Church. And there, too, are to be found Atheists whose Atheism carries with it no implication that they are less worthy than Christians. There are many scientific men in this country who profess belief in God, but as scientists they leave their God at the laboratory door. We have also a science of ethics, and that also has no necessary reference to God. What branch of modern knowledge is there that uses the conception of God as of indispensable utility? It is not economics; it is not sociology. It is not philosophy; it is not pure science. We still have religious beliefs, just as we still have fortune-tellers and soothsayers who utilize the Sunday papers to advertise their wares. But in all these cases we are dealing with individual peculiarities, not with a universally, or even generally, recognized indispensable part of modern life. God has become irrelevant.



Truth is the foundation, the superstructure,  
and the glittering dome of progress.

—Ingersoll.

# REASON

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## DEW DROPS

HITLER who has not yet been excommunicated by the Pope in spite of the effusions of Cardinal Hinsley and the Archbishop of Canterbury and other lesser lights to prove that he is "anti-God" has launched his crusade for the cause of "European Civilization" against atheist Russia with a "May God help us in our battle" on his lips. Had he not been fighting against "Christian England" this holy act would have been sufficient to gain him absolution from all his sins, with a blessing thrown in from the representatives of the Prince of Peace.

\* \* \*  
We would like our readers to guess who said this :

"The destiny of mankind is not decided by material computation. When great causes are on the move in the world, stirring all men's souls, drawing them from the firesides, casting aside comfort, wealth and the pursuit of happiness in response to impulses, at once awe-striking and irresistible we learn that we are spirits, not animals, and that something is going on in space and time and beyond space and time which whether we like it or not, spells duty." (italics ours) And again :

A wonderful story is unfolding before our eyes. How it will end we are not allowed to know. But on both sides of the Atlantic

we all feel—and I repeat all are aware of it—that our future and that of many generations is at stake. We are sure that the character of human society will be shaped by the resolves that we take and the deeds we do." (*italics ours*).

That is Mr. Winston Churchill broadcasting to the people of United States and thanking the Rochester University for conferring on him the honorary Doctorate of Civil Laws.

If the destiny of mankind is not decided by "material computation" by what is it decided? If the sciences of biology and anthropology do not prove that we are animals and not spirits, we would like to know what they prove? And by whom are we not "allowed to know" how it will end? Having heard and read Mr. Churchill's other stirring speeches which are remarkable for their forcefulness and down-right commonsense we are tempted to think that this time he was speaking with his tongue in his cheek and a twinkle in his eye.

Suppose America suddenly decided to pray for England instead of sending war material, since "the destiny of mankind is not decided by material computation," what would happen?

On Thursday, 26th June, Bombay's Bullion Exchange remained closed for the day while members offered prayers for a more bountiful monsoon. And Gad, Sir I didn't it come! 23,000 houses on the Malabar coast were destroyed throwing thousands homeless, cattle drowned and crops destroyed Bombay was isolated from the rest of India, telegraphic and telephonic communications being cut off and railway tracks submerged in floods and land spides—we are told our friends the

sadhus didn't bother a bit, they went into *samadhi* and talked by telepathy. *Om tat sat*, Oscar Wilde was right: "When the gods want to punish us they answer our prayers."

"All religions are alike and are but different paths to the same God" is dinned into our ears "day in and night out." But these very learned gentlemen who say so would most emphatically condemn the action of the four girls in Bombay who it is reported wish to change their religion for very practical reasons.

"Religion yields to Love" runs the heading in a local weekly. Four maidens fair and bold have decided to place personal happiness above religious barriers and face the consequences. They have filed declarations before the Registrar of the Presidency Magistrate's Court to the effect that they were changing their religion in order to marry the men they desire. One religion is as good as another! Or is it?

Cupid has no religion and his arrows strike all youths and maidens alike be they born in different faiths. There may be countless no doubt who suffer meekly the stings of his arrows, bound by the chains of religious barriers. Now and then we hear the agonised cries of one here or there who seeks to rebel against the cruel barriers which keep apart hearts that are linked by bonds far stronger than those of convention. Religion which offers eternal bliss in the next world shall brook no happiness in this. Only to those who can guild their so-called guilt with gold, does religion turn a smiling face of mild connivance. Nay, even proclaim as her own. But to those who cannot pay the price for the violation of established tradition, there shall be no peace!

Abraham Solomon

# THE TEST OF TRUTH-II

*By R. D. KARVE.*

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**I**N the last article we arrived at the problem of what is to be done if anybody takes it into his head to doubt the fundamental law on which all reasoning depends: A proposition cannot be both true and false. Of course a sort of circular proof may be given as follows. Suppose we say that this law is not true, which is the same as saying that a proposition can be both true and false. So then the law which we are assuming to be false may also be true at the same time. This means that even a denial of the law leads us to say that it may be true, which is a contradiction. Here it may be remarked that we are applying the very law which was doubted, because otherwise contradiction would not matter. It may therefore be alleged that this proof is not valid.

But when we assume the law of contradiction to be true, do we at all go through all that reasoning? We do not, we simply assume the law to be self-evident. But we have seen that self-evidence can hardly be considered a test of truth. If we go more deeply into it, we can see that we assume that law not only because it seems self-evident, but because without that law, all reasoning would be at an end and the bottom would fall out of all our boasted scientific knowledge. But this knowledge has not only been accepted, but verified by experience. The question therefore comes to this. Do we prefer to assume that law without a rigorous proof, or to give up all our scientific knowledge as baseless and refrain from any kind of argument because all argument must ultimately depend on

that law? Obviously there is no choice for us but to accept the fundamental law of logic, since we cannot afford to accept the other alternative.

Here then is the ultimate test of proof, that it must not be inconsistent with our established system of knowledge. But there is a serious difficulty here. If scientists are to reject the conclusions derived from experiments made by well-known scientists, as they rejected those of Sir William Crookes, how is any progress in scientific knowledge to be achieved? This is no doubt a difficulty, but it is easy to show that scientists do not in general adopt that attitude. Einstein's theory of relativity was accepted even when it went against much that was considered true before him. For instance rays of light were assumed to travel in a straight line. Einstein declared that 'as light rays passed the sun on their journey from distant stars, they would be bent by the sun's attraction, and hence that stars seen under such conditions would appear to be slightly displaced.' Stars beyond the sun can only be seen at a total eclipse of the sun, so astronomers waited for the eclipse and found that the predictions of Einstein were exact. Did they doubt these observations? They did not. What is the reason of this different treatment given to well-known scientists? The reason is obvious. We attach far greater importance to our belief in the methods of observation than to the one in the actual facts or theories of science. 'We believe that perceptual judgments made under conditions exclusive of bias, ambiguity and

vagueness are more to be relied upon than judgments made only casually. If the observations made at the eclipse were rejected, we would have to reject all similar observations, and in that case, all our astronomical knowledge goes overboard and no further knowledge is possible. In the case of Sir William Crookes' experiments, the conditions were quite different. While nature never cheats, mediums are notorious for cheating. If a medium can produce a living body out of nothing, we should have to admit that something can come out of nothing, which contradicts one of the fundamental truths of science. It is much more probable therefore that the medium cheated than that she produced the body out of nothing. No wonder scientists rejected his conclusions, which involved other contradictions besides. Whereas science has proved that the mind depends on the body and can only function when the brain is in working order, spiritists would have us believe that the mind (or the soul, which comes to the same thing) can exist independently of the body and can function after the death of the body, can not only possess will-power but the power to act on other persons or even on tables and make them write or rap out their messages for anybody who cares to listen. All this seems utter rubbish to anybody who has even the slightest acquaintance with modern scientific knowledge, and naturally nobody cares even to examine the evidence which is often manufactured by tricks which can be reproduced by magicians.

There are some things which are not worth arguing about. The belief in ghosts and witches which was so common in the middle ages has practically disappeared without any special campaign against them simply because it contradicted modern science. What earthly use is it to try to

revive similar beliefs in spirits and mediums, when even the belief in God threatens to go the same way because of the absurdities involved: creation of something out of nothing, mind and will-power without a body and so on?

Coherence then is the ultimate test of truth, the acceptance of any statement depending on the extent to which it may contradict our established store of knowledge or our methods of scientific observation. Of course if it goes against the law of contradiction, it is absolutely rejected, since that is the basis of all argument and even the people who pretend that logic should not be given too much importance use it for their own purposes.

Why is astrology not accepted by scientists? Not only because it has not been proved, but because it is simply absurd to believe that distant stars can have anything to do with the minute details of our private lives and that the moment of our birth has anything to do with the influence of the stars, even if any such influence is admitted for argument's sake. That a particular star or planet can affect you only if it is in a particular position at the moment of your birth is beyond reasonable belief, apart from the fact that a statistical proof of the truth of astrology has not even been attempted. Astrologers know very well—unless they are absolute idiots—that their only chance lies in asserting without trying to prove their theories if they are to continue to live on the credulity of the gullible.

The charge of conservatism will not stand against scientists, since science has been progressing and since so many new theories have taken the place of old ones. Newton's system displaced Ptolemy's, Einstein's system displaced Newton's. But coherence is essential if we are to believe a

(Please turn to page 116)

# ITEMS OF INTEREST

By C. L. D'AVOINE

## "Religious" Cults in Japan Being Curbed

**D**UBIOUS cults, engaged in shady activities in the name of religion, will all be eliminated or drastically expurgated by the Tokyo Metropolitan Police Board, which is reported to have already started a close examination of the leaders of a certain religious organization popular among intellectuals including many noted persons.

The number of bodies of believers though showing a slight decrease at the initial stage of the present China affair, has lately risen again even exceeding the average seen in pre-affair years. In 1938, 38 religious organizations were investigated by the Metropolitan police, which rose to 40 the next year. During the year just past, 50 organizations including the Tenrihondo and the Reiyu societies were placed under police scrutiny, the number being twice as many as recorded in the year just preceding the outbreak of the affair.

As featuring the recent character of these doubtful religious bodies, they are enticing people with words most directly connected with the current stress of the times. Many of them are shrewd enough to avail themselves of the suffering of the war-bereaved families. Cases of doctrinal violation of law as were found in the examination of the Ohmoto or the Tenri societies several years ago, are entirely absent.

\* \* \* \*

When a family is in sorrow over the loss of a member at the front, they will often have a sudden visit from a representative of a certain religious body. The latter will introduce himself, saying: "I had a dream of your son (or husband) at the battle-

field. He said he had just been killed but that somehow his spirit could not have a resting place. I am sure you have a man of that name and I have come to consult with you on our special prayer for the peaceful rest of your beloved one. I am sorry to disturb you but hope you will consider the matter."

The bereaved family is sure to be surprised and in nine cases out of ten readily accepts the visitor's offer, making him requital of a fair sum.

The explanation of the matter is simple enough. The visitor, with his alleged information of the unseen based on his faith, could never know the names of the killed by himself. He investigates the names of the fallen every day from authoritative sources and then runs to the bereaved families.

These and other instances of cheating and demoralizing conduct seen among the dubious cult-followers, threaten to disturb public peace.

\* \* \* \*

Internal troubles are reported among some officially recognized religious orders such as the Soto Zen sect, largely financial, and the police are closely watching. If police intervention seems needed, they will not hesitate to act.

Though the internal trouble among the followers of the Soto Zen sect of Buddhism centering on the investiture of the superintendent of the sect was reported to have been settled with the Education Ministry as mediator, the chief priest of the Eihei Temple, Reverend Tenzan Suzuki being made superintendent, the solution is unsatisfactory to the Sojiji Temple, opponent of the Eihei Temple in the ques-

tion. About 20 representative supporters of the Sojiji Temple called at the religious bureau of the Education Ministry recently to make a representation that the authorities should hereafter cease solving religious bodies' disputes as one-sidedly as had been done now.

This representation, backed by a fairly stiff attitude on the part of the supporters is earnestly hoped by all concerned not to contribute toward making the situation worse.—*Shanghai Evening Post and Mercury*. (April 29, 1941).

\* \* \* \*

One is glad to learn that in Japan some steps are being taken to put a stop to such religious ramps. In some other countries which boast of being civilized, the authorities dare not interfere with such things so long as a religious label is put on such doings. What can be more heartless than the teaching that unless prayers are said by priests for the dead, for which these priests are handsomely paid, the souls of the departed will linger in the tortures of the flame for centuries? This is one of the sources of the immense wealth of certain churches. The unsophisticated firmly believe that priests have the power to liberate the souls of their dead and they will sacrifice anything to get money for such purpose.

\* \* \* \*

There are many other ways of knocking money out of the simple minded which these cunning priests have discovered. Miraculous shrines or churches where miracles occur, holy places, the sale of sacred objects which protect one against the assault of the devil, holy oils, waters and sacred cordons are some of the many devices that have been invented to get money from fools.

\* \* \* \*

Just at present in Bombay a certain institution which goes under the name of a certain Saint is doing its utmost to raise the wind for money. It is sending out pamphlets to one and all likely to fall into its trap. One of these pamphlets is actually lying before me. It claims that the saint in question is so powerful with heaven that his devotees can get anything they want by imploring him. Many such devotees appear to have been benefitted, to judge by the certificates they have given, some of which are printed in that pamphlet. The Saint, in effect, seems able to provide all one can desire, provided one has faith in him and pays for the favours one seeks. The Saint, however, appears to be incapable of doing anything for the institution that bears his name. In money matters, especially, the thing most needed by the said institution, the public must supply, hence the reason for issuing the pamphlet. If this is not a disgraceful ramp, one wonders what it is.

\* \* \* \*

It is now clear that the Spaniards are in full sympathy with the Germans. The papers announce that Spanish volunteers are mustering strong to go to the support of Hitler against Russia. A well-known Spanish General has been appointed to lead them. These staunch Catholics think it is a good opportunity to fight the "godless" Russians. It is natural that these Spanish rebels should be on the side of Hitler and Mussolini who helped them so much during their disgraceful and treacherous insurrection against the Republican Government of Spain. The Pope is said to have condemned Hitler's hostility against the Catholic Church. Yet, here is one of the Pope's favourites, General Franco, in full sympathy with the enemy of his Church! The poor Pope must now find himself in a dilemma indeed.

There is no getting out of the fact that Spain is the most intolerant country in the world. Its zeal for Catholicism makes it the laughing stock of the world in these enlightened days. This is the more remarkable since that country can trace its downfall to its narrow Catholicism. We read in the *Freethinker* of the 27th April last the following :—From a recent issue of "The voice of Spain" we learn that about five out of every six Protestant Churches have been closed. Outside lettering on Protestant meeting-places are forbidden as they "constitute a menace to the public life, and offend the well-ordered feeling of the whole of the nation." In 1939 "the Government confiscated all the Scriptures it could lay hands on and destroyed them." "The Bible House in Barcelona has been closed, and in Madrid probably 100,000 copies of the Bible, Testament and Gospels have been confiscated." "Nationalist Spain is worse, in regard to religious toleration than the Spain of George Borrow one hundred years ago." And the Papacy cries out against the prosecution of religion!

\* \* \* \*

These religious bodies in England who during the Spanish Civil War blindly supported Franco, because he was fighting against the Spanish "Reds" alleged to be the emissaries of "Godless" Russia, must feel very foolish now that Spain—the most Catholic Country in the world—considers Protestantism to be "a menace to public life in that country and that it offends the well-ordered feeling of the whole of the nation." They are no better in Italy, another staunch Catholic Country, and yet England allows full liberty to these Catholics who are so intolerant in their own countries. Sooner or later England will regret her liberality towards these enemies of civilization and progress.

It is with great relief that we learn that rioting has stopped in Bombay and that confidence is returning. It is to be hoped that good relationship between the communities will be established and the insane hatred which stirs some unbalanced individuals to murder one another will be a question of the past. We are sorry to learn that criticism has been levelled at the public for not helping the authorities in securing the murderers who, it would appear, in most cases got away safely though seen in the act by many. The leading paper of Bombay actually went on to say that in England the public would not hesitate to rush out and secure rioters, but here people simply look on and do nothing.

\* \* \*

The trouble here is that while these murderers are armed with deadly knives the public are not allowed to carry even a stick to defend themselves. Who would rush empty-handed at a dangerous man armed with a knife? The public feel that prudence under such circumstances is the better part of valour. One wonders whether the worthy editor of our leading daily would himself rush empty-handed to apprehend a determined man armed with a dangerous dagger. The order prosecuting citizens carrying a stick to defend themselves does not appear, from our point of view, to be a reasonable one. It is quite all right not to allow the carrying of knives, but surely one cannot be deprived of the elementary right of self defence by being prevented from carrying a stick.

\* \* \*

It is really amusing to hear of the change of feeling towards Russia. According to the B.B.C. and some other people in England, Russia is fast reverting to Christianity—the Cathedrals and other Churches (which by the way, were supposed to have been

( Please turn to page 116 )

## THE GOD MAKER

In Ancient days when still the world was new,  
 Fresh from the melting-pot of unknown things,  
 When from some nebula, obscure and vague,  
 This solid universe we know was born :  
 In those old days all earthly life began,  
 And first some strange amorphous creature walked  
 Though humankind had never yet been seen.  
 Through queer, uncharted beings, monstrous, foul,  
 Strange, ape-like forms too bestial to be thought,  
 Through unimagined figures man evolved,  
 Until, when countless centuries had rolled away  
 The first man walked and talked and thought of life.  
 His thoughts were not obscure monstrosities,  
 As pass for thought today. He thought of things,  
 He thought " my axe," " my arrow " or " my wife,"  
 He was not troubled by the tortuous doubts  
 That trouble modern men and fill their minds,  
 With portents of disaster and of doom.  
 But slowly to his mind there came a fear.  
 Why did the wind blow strangely soft one day ?  
 And why, another, did the hurricane  
 Tear down the giant trees above the hill ?  
 Why was it, when he slept, he saw the forms  
 Of those who from the world had passed away ?  
 Why did he periodically, sleep ?  
 And where was he when all his body slept,  
 But he did not ? Such idle questionings  
 Might we imagine that first man to make.  
 From these first vague and curious doubts,  
 He made a ghost and from the ghost a god,  
 Who ruled his tribe and held him in a thrall.  
 The god of tribal might would help him on,  
 And to this god, strange named and strangely made  
 He would appeal in times of peace and war.  
 The arts of peace would make the god's abode.  
 The arts of war, god's sport ; god's hiding place  
 Would be in country lonely and taboo,  
 And to his god would man make sacrifice.  
 The best of fruits, the best of beasts and man  
 To God alone were given, for God made  
 All his happiness, all joy, all right to live.

||

Then there arose that band of clever men,  
 The priests, the man who claimed alone to know  
 God's tenets, God's desires and holy whims,  
 And through whom only man could please his god.  
 When man had made a god, he made a priest,  
 And priest made god more strong : so went they on  
 And in one long succession they conspired.

This went in such a wise for countless years,  
 So new gods still arose as old ones died,  
 Until at last the gods were numberless,  
 And man must worship at so many shrines,  
 That it were difficult to hold aloof  
 From such conspiracies of priestly craft.  
 Men ate their gods to take on holy strength  
 And drank God's blood to gather mighty power,  
 And when at last the priests saw men grow cold,  
 And disregarding, they produced new schemes :  
 They promised that if man believed in God  
 And worshipped with all strength they could com-  
 mand,  
 Then men should be with God in years to come,  
 Finding a dwelling-place in regions new,  
 Living for ever in sweet ecstasy.  
 This new device of priestly cleverness  
 Drew more to priestly coffers day by day,  
 And so for centuries the men still came  
 To musty, darkened caves and buildings drear  
 And worshipped at the shrines of futile gods,  
 All sanctified and turned to priestly ends.  
 The gods we meet to-day are still the same,  
 They are but like (though vaguer) gods of yore :  
 Jehovah, Baal and Ashtoreth are one  
 With versions of the ghost of ancient times,  
 Made in the image of the man of old.  
 If man pretends that God of this our time,  
 Is different from million years ago,  
 It is but self-deception, wilful sin,  
 Which cannot be supported or upheld.

|||

This is a sorry picture to present,  
 But, happily, another can be seen.  
 The gods are dying ; man is slow, but sure,  
 And soon the gods are dead ; the poor belief  
 In some provincial heaven in the sky  
 Will fade to nothingness and disappear.  
 Then, in that happy day when gods are gone,  
 When no more foolish myths the human race  
 Will take as evidence of holy truth,  
 Man will at last be free. The bonds of God  
 Which from primeval times have bound men's minds  
 Will be destroyed. Oh, may that happy day  
 Be near on us, when from poor foolish cries  
 Of " Oh, God, hear us," we may be relieved,  
 And turn from this mad hope of future bliss  
 To some attempt to make all life on earth  
 More possible and nearer our desire.

by Herbert Shelly,  
 from " The Freethinker."



# GLORIES OF MATERIALISM

By **AKSHAYAKUMAR R. DESAI.**

INDIA has been, for centuries, an impregnable fortress of Religion and Idealist (Spiritualistic) Philosophy. It has been for ages the land of the total dictatorship of God rarely challenged by any materialist revolt.

It has been the proud claim of Idealist Indians like Tagore, Gandhi and others that there always existed, in India, complete freedom for preaching any species of philosophical views. This may be true of philosophies which were idealistic or even sceptic, agnostic or semi-materialist (Sankhya, Buddhism, Jainism). But there is no evidence that militant materialism declaring uncompromising war on Spiritualism was ever tolerated. In fact, there is positive evidence that one such attempt was mercilessly suppressed. When Charvaka began to propagate his philosophy of Materialism, official society, state and the priesthood of the period, launched venomous and inhuman persecution of him. He was socially ostracised and his works were made a bonfire of. He was branded as a monster of immorality and his philosophy was misrepresented as the cult of riotous living.

Real Materialism, in contrast to half-hearted materialism such as agnosticism and scepticism, could never evolve in India because of the secular and ecclesiastical terror. The materialist was always considered a social pariah and a moral leper and Materialism maligned as the philosophy of libertinism.

In fact, the converse is true. It is materialism which alone can provide a sound basis for healthy human life, comradely

relations among men and scientific, disciplined and progressive social existence, free from social or individual neurosis.

While Idealism based on the God conception always confused and stultified the human mind and paralysed or distorted man's practical endeavour, Materialism has given him a clear insight into the processes of the real world and guided his activity, making it productive and useful to himself. Man has become intelligent and master of his environment in proportion to the extent to which he freed himself from the deadening grip of Idealism and built up a Materialist Outlook.

## IDEALISM

Idealist Philosophy has worked havoc with the human mind and emotions. It has incited man to focus his attention on a fictitious spiritual world, thereby disorienting him from the real material world of which he is the product and a conscious part. It undermines his appetite for the things of the real world. A God-haunted man constantly strives to put himself in touch, by means of trances, with God, the Will-O'-The-Wisp of his own imagination. Now, we know that a living species, if it does not master its material environment, declines and perishes. Idealism, by destroying man's interest in the material world, sabotages any effort on his part to understand that world (Science) and transform the elements of that world for his own use (production of things useful to maintain his life). Thus, by distracting man from his basic biologic task of preserving his existence by understanding and conquering the material world and instigating him to concentrate

his thought and emotional energy on the phantoms of his own creation, God and the Divine World, Idealism endangers the very biological existence of the human species.

Idealism prevents man from seeing the world as it is. It mystifies everything. God has created the world including human society. God alone knows the purpose of this creation. Man can never decipher God's motives, so he must remain a passive spectator of all changes that take place in the world. Idealism reduces man to nothing and elevates the fiction God to everything. Man, God's own creator, crawls before his own creation. Idealism reduces the real world to a phantasy and the phantastic spiritual world to a reality. Man drugged by spiritual philosophy sees things topsy-turvy.

Idealism mystifies everything including social relations, art, ethics. Relations between man and man are not conceived materially, i.e., as the outcome of a common material struggle against nature. Instead of the real interests of mankind becoming the norm for determining human actions, Idealism demands that human actions should conform to some absolute spiritual principle, the Good, the True, the Divine.

In the scheme of Idealistic Philosophy, the shadow of God hangs over every phenomenon. It undermines man's confidence in himself. It makes man God-reliant rather than self-reliant. It robs man of his dignity and power. It makes man's creations such as song, painting, sculpture, mystical and ghost-like due to the idealistic content in them.

Religion is the crudest type of Idealist philosophy. Its notorious role in dividing humanity into warring factions is well known. The hierarchic social construction leading to oppression and enslavement of

man by man is defended by the religious conceptions of the world, where God reigns as supreme authority. The God-idea implies autocratic, unlimited power at the top and all autocratic social structures and state regimes rest on this principle. Idealism, postulating a transmaterial, omniscient, arbitrary and all powerful Mind, behind the material world, serves, in the final analysis, as a philosophical defence of all authoritarian systems in the social world. All defenders of these systems involve God to defend them. The feudal kings ruled by Divine Right. Hitler wields dictatorship over the German People by the will of God. It is not the Indian People who should pronounce judgment on the correctness or incorrectness of Gandhi's political strategy since it is inspired by the infallible Inner Light illuminating Gandhi's mind. The defenders of the oppressive and undemocratic caste system of the Hindus frequently draw arguments from the arsenal of Idealism. As God is the supreme consciousness of the dead universe, the Brahmins incarnate the supreme intelligence of the Hindu race. In fact, according to the Hindu scriptures, Brahmins emanated from the head of God, while other gross castes sprang from the remaining less respectable parts of God's body. And since Shudras sprang from the legs of God, they are lowest in the social scale and should eternally slave for the Brahmins and other higher castes.

Idealism leads straight to the anti-democratic Nietzschean cult of the Superman. As God rules the universe, the Superman must rule mankind in the social world.

This is why idealistic, God-based philosophies are supported and subsidised by all tyrants, by all ruling classes who rule "by the will of God."

## MATERIALISM

Materialism comes as a fresh breeze after the suffocating atmosphere of idealism.

Materialism means confronting reality boldly and truthfully. The materialist recognizes the material world as real, however unpleasant and full of obstacles it be, and, through planned and strenuous labour, transforms it for his own use. Science, technology and the production of objects necessary for man's preservation and development, are the outcome of a materialist approach to the surrounding world.

Idealism means repudiating the existence of the material world as unreal because its admission as real would make a patient and hard study of that world obligatory and, above all, demand from man practical efforts to grapple with the obstacles of the real world and overcome them. Idealism means dishonest, dastardly denial and avoidance of the real world and concentration on the mythical world of Spirit. It is the method of "changing the self in emotion and idea because it is too difficult to change the world."

Thus Materialism leads to a steady progression of human knowledge of the recognized material world and, through social practice guided by that knowledge, transformation of that world for man's use. Idealism, on the other hand, leads to a series of sterile subjective efforts, inducing self-hallucinated states in man who imagines he is Brahman, Spirit. The consistent idealist is perennially engaged in a false and fatal withdrawal from any exchange with the material world of which, in reality, he is a product and a component part. The intellectual and emotional energies of idealist thinkers like Aurobindo Ghose are dissipated in futile chasing after fictions of their own high-strung imagination, Universal Spirit and the Divine World.

Idealism disarms man in face of the forces of nature and thereby helps these forces to overwhelm him. Materialism arms man with a correct approach to these forces whereby man understands and controls them. Idealism leads to egocentric existence so that man, like a tortoise, withdraws into his own shell, and therein, constantly and alone strives for God-realization. Materialism prompts men to unite and fraternize with one another on the battle front of the struggle against nature. It creates the emotion of human solidarity, in the joint struggle against nature for the common benefit. Thus, while Materialism is the philosophy of social co-operation and human comradeship, Idealism is the philosophy of social death. Materialism alone can help to reconstruct relations between man and man by locating all maladjustments and discords among them. In short, Materialism means the triumphant march of mankind to higher and higher peaks of socio-biological existence.

If humanity survived for ages, it was not due to but in spite of Idealist Philosophy. While Idealism instigated man to disorient himself from the real world and waste his powers in chasing hobgoblins of the spiritual world, his will to live prompted him to grapple with the material world. Man has always been an instinctive materialist. Spurred on by an inexorable will to live, he instinctively recognized the world as real, though under the influence of the religious outlook, consciously denying it. Though thwarted by his own wrong idealistic conception of the world, he instinctively organized exploration of the world on materialist lines, even in the past, gathered scientific knowledge (Astronomy, Mathematics, Agronomy, etc.) and converted matter into forms suited to his use (Agriculture, Medicine, handicrafts). This

instinctive materialist practice of man explains why he survived for ages in spite of his wrong spiritual outlook which only confused and hampered this practice.

So, Materialism consciously unites man with the real world. It sets him consciously active on the road to understanding and mastering that world. It kindles in him an appetite for real things in life which alone can nourish and strengthen him. It imbues him with healthy enthusiasm for joys of the flesh. It prompts him to solidarize and fraternize with other human beings in jointly struggling against his environment. It calls on him to unite with his fellowmen to destroy social systems which have outlived their historical utility measured in terms of serving the real interests of mankind, instead of giving an idealistic defence of these systems as God-made. Materialism liberates ethics from mysticism with which idealism has clothed it and makes it truly human. Materialism spares nothing. It adopts for its criteria objective truthfulness and human usefulness, in pronouncing judgments on institutions and ideologies. It scornfully rejects the Divine Origin of Kingship, the Sacrosanct character of the institutions that be, the eternal validity of things. Nothing is God-created.

Materialism restores man to himself after the wasteful idealistic chase for the fiction of God for ages. Man's self-confidence, his power and dignity, return unto him. Materialism liberates and integrates humanity in contrast to religion which always divided it.

## INDIA

It is true, India is still a citadel of religion and spiritual philosophy. But this should not be a matter of pride but of mental

perturbation to all progressive Indians who desire to see India socially, economically and intellectually advanced.

The Indian People are confronted with colossal problems. If they are not able to find a progressive solution of these problems, they will suffer a social retrogression. Only the Materialist Philosophy can provide a scientific understanding of these problems and indicate programmes and policies for their solution.

Spiritual Philosophy has taught the Indian People to maintain a satisfied attitude to the *status quo*. It has drugged them into accepting the social scheme as it is. It has provided religious activity as a safety valve for their mental and emotional discontent.

Materialism alone can rouse the People from this state of age-long somnolence. It alone can give them the correct perspective of the mighty socio-historical problems they are faced with. It alone can free them from abject reliance on supernatural forces to solve these problems and evoke confidence in their powers.

Tagores, Aurobindos, and Gandhis are attempting to strengthen the religious impulses of the Indian People. They are mystifying politics, economics, ethics. This blurs and stultifies the mind of the Indian People, inoculates them with misconceptions and thereby misdirects and renders futile the practical effort of hundreds of millions of Indians for political freedom, economic advance and scientific cultural progress.

Only Materialism can correctly guide human endeavour on the correct road, by correct means, to a clearly perceived objective.

## REVIEWS

**The Truth About Gandhi**, by M. D. Japheth, published by the author at 164, Hornby Road, Fort, Bombay. Price Re. 1-8.

The author is evidently a wholesale admirer of Gandhi with all his fads and eccentricities. He cares as little for consistency as his idol. On page 19, for instance, "Gandhi's goal is national independence for India. That is his end. His means are non-violent non-co-operation.....Finding the end nowhere in view, Lord Halifax discredits the means, perhaps ignorant of the fact that to Gandhi non-violence is not merely a means but an end in itself (author's italics), the practice of which is virtual victory and liberty." What becomes then of the goal of national independence? Apparently it is not necessary to reach it actually. It is *virtually obtained* if non-violence is practised! And this is the leader whom the country is to trust, a juggler who tells you that non-violence itself is liberty!

The author mentions Tolstoy's influence on Gandhi and gives a long quotation from the former (pp. 33-39). In this the great Guru says: "I cannot fathom God's whole design, for the sake of which the universe exists and lives; but the Divine work which is being accomplished in this world and in which I participate by living is comprehensible to me....." and so I must try to carry out God's will. How is one to know that Hitler is not at present carrying out God's will? Or is Hitler powerful enough to act against God's will? The Mahatma claims to possess an inner voice which tells him what to do in emergencies, and, on his own confession, leads him to commit Himalayan mistakes on some occasions. It is interesting to compare what Hitler says about himself: "Unless I have the inner incorruptible conviction:

*this is the solution, I do nothing.* Not even if the whole party tried to drive me to action. I will not act; no matter what happens. But if the voice speaks, then I know the time has come to act." ("Hitler Speaks," by Hermann Rauschning, p. 181). Is this not exactly what Gandhi has been doing? Of course the author thinks that Gandhi alone has access to the Truth with a capital T, but why should anybody else believe it? Who will believe Gandhi's statement that the Gita teaches non-violence, when as a matter of fact, the whole of the Bhagavat-Gita is a lecture delivered on the battlefield to induce Arjuna to fight when the latter had a fit of non-violence? But Gandhi says (p. 42) "As for myself, I run to my mother Gita whenever I find myself in difficulties....." The author writes about conscience as if Gandhi alone had a conscience worth listening to. Conscience is very often a convenient means of deceiving oneself, but the author thinks that Gandhi alone is an exception to this general rule.

It cannot be denied that Gandhi has been a great force in the present political awakening of India, but even if one gives him credit for that, a mystical worship of Gandhi is hardly likely to serve any purpose, even from a political point of view, apart from the fact that it is hardly a sign of intelligence.

R. D. Karve.

**"Vishwa-Vihar"** (Marathi), by Rao Bahadur Prof. D. L. Sahasrabuddhe, D.Sc., M.Ag., M.Sc., Deccan Gymkhana Colony, Poona 4. Pp. 180, price Rs. 2.

This book is intended to give the general reader a philosophical view of the world based on scientific knowledge, starting with a general view of the universe, explaining gravitation, relativity, the chemical and physical constitution of the earth, and going on to describe how at a particular stage,

life began on it and gradually evolved more and more complicated forms. Then it deals with life, growth, death, heredity, sex and religious conceptions about the soul and its reincarnation, and has a final chapter on the future of mankind. A very useful book dealing with a number of sciences in passing and treating the whole subject rationalistically as would be expected from the author.

R. D. Karve.

**"Jaganteel Dharma-Pantha"** (Marathi), by the same author. Pp. 239, price Rs. 2.

This book gives a summary of the tenets of all the religions of the world, one chapter being devoted to each religion. The Hindu religion takes up five chapters, the first dealing with Hinduism in general and the other four being given to four different sects, two ancient and two modern. The summary of the tenets of each religion is given as a believer would give it, though the author is himself a rationalist and gives his own views of religious ideas in the last four chapters.

This may therefore serve as a reference book for anybody who wants to know what constitutes a particular religion. It is also excellent propaganda from the rationalistic point of view, as a comparative study of religions is the surest way to rationalism. The author deserves to be congratulated on an excellent piece of work.

R. D. Karve.

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## CORRESPONDENCE

**A. C. Ukil**, Calcutta, Change of address noted. Please let us inform if you have not received previous issues of *Reason*, which have been sent to your old address.

**O. B. R. Dickey**, Kashmir, Thanks for cutting. See *Dew Drops*. *Reason* is being sent regularly to the President, Free-thinkers Society, Shrinagar, but we have heard nothing from that end, nor has our letter been replied to. Could you please find out what is happening? We wish all our readers would make it a point to send us cuttings, as it is difficult to keep in touch with papers in all parts of India.

**S. B. Deshkar**, Jaipur, writes: ".....the article on 'Hydra of Pakistan' I think, would have best been avoided. I admit, that the Editors are not responsible for the views expressed in the journal but if political controversies like Pakistan are discussed in the paper, I am afraid, that is just likely to defeat the very purpose of Rationalism. I would like the Editors to confine themselves to the domain of rationalism and not indulge in irrelevant topics. Pakistan is an absorbing topic of the day but such controversies, we must tackle psychologically in the political arena and must not be given space in a journal like *Reason* which is expected to promote the cause of Rationalism in India. One may argue that Pakistan is an unreasonable plan and hence the Rationalist Association through its medium *Reason* must bring home to its readers the unreasonable things in it. This means that it is taken as a certainty that Pakistan is an unreasonable idea. May I tell you that the confusion is worse confounded due to the malicious interpretation and a passionate propaganda in the so-called nationalist press by most of the renegade Gandhites? Pakistan is not a bug-bear. What we have to do is to handle it intelligently by suggesting

alternative plan and not kicking it on the very face of it."

Much confusion is caused in the controversy on Pakistan because the people who use that word do not care to make clear what exactly they mean. With the purely political aspects of the question we are here not concerned. Apart from what our contributor had to say in his article on the "Hydra of Pakistan" one thing is certain; the scheme seeks to divide the people of India on a religious basis, a division which does not exist in fact but is only man made. In action it arouses mass frenzy and hatred against those not belonging to the point of view of its promoters. It is this that every rationalist we think ought to oppose.

—Asstt. Editor.

## NOTES

We regret that the features which were announced in last issue will not appear, due to certain difficulties. Prof. H. V. Hampton who was to write on Education for this issue has suddenly had to leave Bombay. We hope to start the features as soon as possible. We request our members to send articles for publication.

\* \* \*

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V. S. Mudvedkar, Rs. 5; A. M. Zawawi, Rs. 5; J. M. Cooper, Rs. 5; E. Michael, Rs. 5; A. Rapatakos, Rs. 5; S. B. Deshkar, Jaipur, Rs. 5; Mangaldas P. Pai, Rs. 5; Rao Bahadur Prof. D. L. Sahasrabuddhe, Poona, Rs. 5.

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(Continued from page 104)

statement, and it is instinctively accepted as essential everywhere. "The more connected and consistent is the testimony of a witness in a law court, the more likely are his separate statements to be true.... The law of gravitation is confirmed by its application to explain the motion of projectiles, the course of the planets, the tides, the common pump, etc." And Einstein's theory is only a nearer approach to the truth than Newton's.

We may close with a final reflection on coherence. "Coherence means more than consistency. It means not only that the various constituents entering into the system of truth are compatible with each other, but also that they necessitate each other. The system assumed is a system ideally perfect, for nothing less than this would satisfy intelligence as stable beyond rectification." Of course the ideal is not yet attained, nor is it likely to be, at least in the near future. When the ideal is attained, there will be no further changes in scientific theories, but so long as it is not, changes have to be accepted as a further approach to the ideal, which is something that may never be attained. Even then, we cannot accept anything which is not coherent with our existing knowledge.

(Continued from page 107)

destroyed) they say, are crowded with people seeking the blessings of the priests. Well, only a few weeks ago Russia was a godless country which, they contend, civilization ought to wipe out from the face of the earth. At any rate these god-fearing Spaniards think so and as said above, in their religious enthusiasm they are rushing out, to help Hitler to exterminate those Atheists. We are really living in a funny world.

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Do not ask who said this or that,  
but mark what is spoken.

—Landor.

# REASON

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Asstt. Editor :  
Abraham Solomon

The writers of the articles in this journal are themselves responsible for the views expressed and do not implicate the Rationalist Association of India in any way.

We invite contributions of not more than 1,500 words on topics of interest to rationalists. They should be type-written. If not published they will not be returned unless stamps are enclosed.

All contributions, correspondence, press cuttings, journals in exchange, enquiries regarding advertisement rates, etc., should be addressed to Mr. Abraham Solomon, Asstt. Editor, "REASON," 59, Karmali Building, Arthur Road, Bombay, 11.

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## DEW DROPS

**W**E are living in strange times full of surprises and unexpected happenings though not so unexpected to those who have managed to keep themselves in touch with the trend of events. Indeed much that we see and hear today is extremely funny had it not been so tragic.

\* \* \*

One cannot help smiling at the Archbishop of Canterbury above all men now advising all possible help to Russia. If there was anyone in England who had always abused Russia, it was that most Christian bishop. He was always advising people to have nothing to do with that "Godless" country. A great deal of the hatred and mistrust of Russia by certain classes was due to malicious propaganda simply because Russia had disestablished religion. And also, it would appear, because it had socialised private property, though one wonders what those who claim to concentrate on the spiritual have to do with such material things.

\* \* \*

Another anti-Soviet who has also spoken and assured the people of England that there is nothing wrong with an alliance between England and Russia is the Archbishop of York. He assured the people that there was nothing to worry

about an alliance between England and "Godless" Russia because Russia, he said, is fast becoming a God-fearing country. According to him the churches which till recently we were told were all destroyed seem to have sprung up like mushrooms, and people are crowding the same. It is really pathetic to see how these anti-Soviets are veering round at least in their pronouncements now that Russia has become an ally.

\* \* \*

Readers will find it interesting to reread, even if they have already read that excellent book by Mr. Joseph McCabe, *The Papacy in Politics Today* (Watts 1s), first published in 1937 in which he makes a most revealing survey of Vatican plots and intrigues in all countries.

\* \* \*

The war news these days is certainly more hopeful than it was some weeks ago. Russia seems to be successfully resisting the enemy and is fighting with a valour and skill not quite expected. It shows that the scientific education that the new generation has received has transformed the Russian in a manner which is now winning the admiration of the world. It is no doubt too early to predict future events; but it looks as if "Godless" Russia has God on her side and that after all she is going to deliver the world from a monster whom God-fearing countries were incapable of mastering.

\* \* \*

"The path of social reform is not strewn with roses, and hardships are the usual lot of reformers, especially in a custom-ridden State like Cochin." Mr. Mahadev Desai is reported to have said in the course of a communication conveying "Mahatma" Gandhi's opinion to the President of the Cochin District Congress Committee, who sought advice regarding an excommunicated

husband and wife on account of their inter-caste marriage. Mr. Desai expressed "Mahatma" Gandhi's inability to show the couple any way out of the difficulties if they should remain in Cochin. "But there is a way out," said Mr. Desai, "and that is to leave Cochin. Our friend seems to be a business man and his wife a midwife. There should be no difficulty in both making an honourable living outside Cochin. But, as I have said, if they must remain in Cochin, they must pay the price."

\* \* \*

Such is the advice from the great "Mahatma" who poses as the champion of equality of man to those who seek to establish that equality in practice. And that too not even between two different religions but within the Hindu religion between two castes. Not a word in condemnation of those responsible for the excommunication falls from the Mahatmaic lips which have talked so glibly about Harijan uplift. But Mr. Gandhi will always fight fearlessly so that the untouchables may have the right to enter the temples of superstition, those monuments to man's ignorance and the freedom to prostrate and pray to a gigantic illusion.

\* \* \*

One fine day a bullock cart was jogging along its rugged way along an uneven road in ancient Kolhapur. The bullock was tired but the driver was convinced of the stimulating effect of his good old whip, and was, it seems, making a liberal use of it on the poor bullock. But every dog has his day, so why not a bullock? Down he suddenly squatted in the middle of the road and refused to budge, so reports a pleader of Kolhapur in a vernacular paper. Not stopping at that, the bullock even burst into human speech, saying "Why are you beating me? What have I done to you?" We are not told what happened later, but but lo! Balaam's ass hath found a rival.

Abraham Solomon

# LOGIC IN THEORY & PRACTICE

*By* **R. D. KARVE.**

**H**AVING come to the conclusion that no new statement can be accepted as true unless it is consistent and coherent with our previous knowledge, or, to be more accurate, with the sum of knowledge acquired by mankind during past ages, it is interesting to inquire how far we apply this test in practice. In our daily life, we are hardly ever called upon to decide the scientific accuracy of any statement, but we do instinctively apply the above test so far as we can to any new statement that we may hear. When any person gives us a piece of information and such person is known to be generally reliable and we have no reason to suspect him of any motive for lying in that particular instance, we usually believe him. Of course no man's word can by itself be considered a proof of anything at all unless there is corroborative evidence. With that reservation, however, we do accept information as true when we have no reason to doubt it, and it would be extremely impracticable to go into the scientific accuracy of every statement that may be made to us.

Apart from that, if we consider how far we make use of logic in practice, we find that even educated people who may talk glibly about logic are very often incapable of logical argument, even when they are not wilfully perverse or blinded by self-interest. The following instance may amuse our readers.

It is well known that all over the world, successful attempts are made by big advertisers to control the press to such an extent as to make 'freedom of the press'

a ridiculous phrase. The press does not dare to say a word against any widely advertised product from which periodicals make an income. An editor may be perfectly honest but he is very often only an employee, who dare not offend the capitalist behind him, whose only object is profit and who cannot afford to lose advertisements. As a particular case, in India as elsewhere, cinema film producers try their best to suppress all adverse comment on their films under the threat of withdrawing their advertisements, and as they are some of the biggest advertisers at present, these threats cannot be ignored. An instance occurred recently, which led to very amusing argument.

The Prabhat Film Co. is so notorious in this matter that a resolution condemning its policy was on the agenda of the recent Marathi Press Conference held in Poona, where it was promptly suppressed in the subjects committee. The company in question is naturally loth to admit that it exerts any such influence on the press, and as there is hardly ever any documentary evidence and the spoken word leaves no trace, it is difficult, if not impossible, to prove the charge. A case in point was that as it was alleged that their film 'Shejari' was based on a story by a known author without any acknowledgment or payment to him, this was naturally denied by defenders of the company. A local weekly thereupon announced its intention of printing that story in full, so that readers could judge for themselves. Of course this did not suit the company. The story was set in type, ready to be printed, when a sudden order came from the proprietor

of the weekly, who is also the proprietor of the press, that the story must not be printed. I received reliable information of this from the press itself and it was not difficult to see what had happened. I was informed that word had been received by the proprietor that advertisements would be withdrawn from all the journals owned by that proprietor if that story was printed. I therefore published a statement to this effect in my Marathi monthly and this was immediately hotly denied. I persisted in my statement, however, saying that I had reliable evidence of what I stated, though it was not possible to publish that evidence, since employees of the press would be afraid of losing their jobs if they came forward openly with a statement of the truth.

My persistence gave rise to a campaign of lies and personal abuse against me, in which I was naturally at a disadvantage with a tiny monthly of my own against a weekly of much bigger size, apart from my unwillingness to descend to abuse. As a result of this controversy, the offending weekly was altogether stopped by the proprietor, because the editor, Mr. Warerkar, is a friend of mine and was suspected of having given me the information. Mr. Warerkar was not receiving any salary as editor, the proprietor having very graciously agreed to take the responsibility of carrying on a Congress propaganda paper, which Mr. Warerkar himself had no resources to enable him to do. He had quietly submitted to the proprietor's decision, but that was apparently not enough. As he would not have agreed to carry on the campaign of vilification against me, the editor of another weekly belonging to the same proprietor undertook the task of trying to find, invent or distort incidents in my past life with the object of proving that I was not only unreliable, but

altogether a bad man, so that any statement made by me had no value : the *argumentum ad hominem* to take the place of logic.

Even then, a semblance of logic had to be given. As I had admitted that I could not produce the evidence on which I relied, though to me it was satisfactory, the editor of this weekly, who is a graduate and may be supposed to have some idea of logic, proffered the statement that "any statement for which evidence could not be produced must necessarily be a lie." Of course this was utter rubbish, but being handicapped for space, I contented myself with the retort that in that case every person must be considered an illegitimate child, since nobody could produce evidence of his or her legitimacy !

But he was not to be beaten. Leaving this retort unanswered, he came forward with what he thought a poser. Knowing that I was an atheist, he wrote : "What will Mr. Karve say if theists maintained that they had evidence of the existence of God, but that this evidence could not be published ? Would this not prove that God existed after all ?" And he sat back in his editorial chair with a grunt of satisfaction at having completely floored me with this brilliant retort ! As the existence of God was not the point under discussion, I refrained from making any reply except that it was not my business to give lessons in logic to that editor. Obviously it would be a waste of time to argue with an opponent who was capable of that exhibition of ineptitude.

Let us however examine this retort here, since the existence of God is an important point for this journal and I found that some people did think that reply a good one. I have given my reasons why my evidence could not be published. Can

(Please turn to page 123)

# THE BISHOP OF BOMBAY

ON

## GOD AND RELIGION AFTER THE WAR

*By C. L. D'AVOINE.*

THE Anglican Bishop of Bombay must, in these war days, be feeling as uneasy on the question of God and religion as are many of his colleagues on the subject in England. In the columns of "The Times of India" of the 24th July last, he has unburdened himself and tried to impress his readers on the importance of "true" religion and the belief in God. He says that in these days of stress and emotion caused by the War, a great change is taking place in England in the attitude of people towards religion, and he is sure that on account of this, good will come out of evil. Man, he says, will always believe true religion, though the world has seen too much of "out of date, mistaken religion." Already, he says, people are thinking seriously of religion which in time of peace they do not, and he thinks this is a sign for good. It would be nearer the truth to say, to judge by their anxiety and active propaganda at present, that it is the Clergy of England who are seriously thinking of what will be the future of religion after the War. They all seem apprehensive that a change, not to their liking, in the attitude of the people towards religion would be fraught with great danger for them and make their position insecure. People can do without religion, but the Clergy would perish without it. The Bishop admits that changes in the attitude of the people towards religion have set in long ago, though at heart, he says, people have remained faithful to true religion. Science, says the Bishop, has made tremendous advance in recent years which has

changed some old established religious habits of thought. Darwinism and critical study of the Bible, he says, have swept overboard some queer primitive things such as creation in six days and animals walking two and two into an ark, and immoral things like the murder of prisoners being thought to be God's wish. But on the whole, the Bible remains as true as ever. He attributes also a good deal of the indifference of the people to religion to the motor cars and golf-course. Despite all this, he says, theology has kept pace with Science though religion has not. There is no doubt that the good Bishop must be a very complacent person to imagine that all is well with religion despite the unbelief which has necessarily followed deeper knowledge through the spread of science. It is not the question of creation in six days and the story of the ark that have been thrown overboard; Science has shown that most of the Biblical stories are pure myths and legends and the "truth" of Christianity to be absolutely unreliable.

Yet, the Bishop is bold enough to assure his readers that though religion has not kept pace with Science, theology has. One is naturally curious to know what teaching of theology has kept pace with Science. The Bishop does not specify any instance though he seems to hint that God works by evolution and Science has shown that man is made of bone, blood and spirit.

It is needless to remark here, that Darwinism, which traces the origin of

man from the lower animals, and therefore shatters to smithereens the story of the Fall on which Christianity is founded, does not in the least support the belief that there is an immortal soul in man as theology teaches. Neither does Science point to the existence of a living God who, the Bishop tells us, reveals Himself to man in tabloid doses. It is clear that Evolution has suggested this idea. The Bishop is sure that this living God, who is unchangeable in His revelation to man, expands to keep pace with the growth, sometimes slow, sometimes fast, of the human beings He created and to whom He gave powers of comprehension that He meant should advance and not stagnate. If this is the manner in which theology has kept pace with Science by inventing such a jargon, one must certainly admire the lively imagination of these theologians who seem to know all the secrets of the manner in which God works! There is no doubt that these theologians seem to be terribly familiar with God. They have an advantage over us, Rationalists, who have not even a nodding acquaintance with Him.

Having proved to his satisfaction that man has an immortal soul, that God exists and that Christ is God, the Bishop solemnly warns us that we ignore Him at our peril. Here we see how well theology has kept pace with Science. His theological knowledge being so well founded, he tells us that there can be no morality without a foundation, and that foundation is religion. By religion the Bishop, of course, means "true" religion which for him is Christianity, for the other religions are out of date, mistaken nonsense!

The Bishop is certain that all decency and still more all unselfishness rest on the foundation of religion. "Abandon," he

says, "the old religious foundation, and, sooner or later, you find selfishness and cruelty being preached as the truest wisdom. That is how our present enemies came to be trampling on other countries and machine-gunning women and children. They have come to believe such actions to be sound sense. Decent behaviour must rest on some recognized ultimate truth. Sooner or later the lesson must be learnt; without a sheet anchor of faith your boat, however gaily painted, will drive to destruction: your own little boat and your country's great liner."

Dear me! How conveniently the Bishop forgets the cruelty, the selfishness, the barbarism and ferocity of the Age of Faith? One would think that the world was a paradise until Science made us doubt religion and God. Hitler and Mussolini, however, believe in God and the former actually believes that God is on his side.

Anyhow, we Rationalists had better be careful. We have no religion and therefore can have no foundation for morality, for decency and unselfishness! According to the Bishop we are heading straight for destruction. Can one after this treat these professional theologians seriously? One cannot help feeling that when they speak in this manner they speak with their tongues in their cheek, unless, of course, they are really stupid enough to believe all the rubbish they talk. We are undoubtedly living in a world of sham and small wonder men behave in the manner they do at present.

Knowing God so well, the Bishop thinks it proper to advise us how to keep on good terms with God and what to do to please Him. We must pray and sacrifice ourselves. God, he says, came on earth to sacrifice Himself. We must also sacrifice ourselves if we want to get good things. The world,

says the Bishop, has been taking things too easily and too lightheartedly. God is punishing us for this. "God," says the Bishop, "is chastening the world now for past contentment with low standards and ideals. The new world that He must certainly have in view ; for He is a God of progress, (How well the Bishop knows all that ! ) will have to be bought by sacrifice and self-discipline. They are the only coins He accepts. They are the price, we all know, of victory in war ; they are equally the price of any happiness in peace. In war a country can perhaps raise sufficient of this coin without conscious faith or resort to God. In peace no country can do so for long ; ultimately God is the only treasury from which can be drawn the virtues essential to real happiness."

Well, you know now why the world is passing through such a severe crisis. A Bishop, living in the twentieth century, tells us that God is punishing us for the neglect of Him. Is it possible that any sincere person claiming to be well educated can believe such a thing ? What a debased idea of God he has !

Imagine a God seated somewhere in the clouds smiting right and left, killing helpless women and children, the aged and the innocent, nay even animals—destroying madly, not even sparing His own houses, simply to satisfy Himself, and we are told that He is the only treasury from which can be drawn the virtues essential to real happiness !

Are we not fortunate, we Rationalists, that we no longer believe in such a fiend ? We must indeed congratulate ourselves that we do not and cannot believe in such a monster. We can only pity those who believe or pretend to believe in such a Being.

(Continued from page 120)

similar or any other kind of reasons prevent the publication of evidence for the existence of God ? Of course if anybody seriously maintained that he had evidence which could not be published, it would at most justify him in believing in God, but such evidence would be no good for anybody else. The editor in question could have replied in the same way to me and I would have left it at that, because then it would be a question of my judgment in believing that evidence as against the word of the parties interested in denying it. Instead of that, he is till trying to discredit me in other ways.

Of what nature can such evidence be for the existence of God ? Of course there may be statements by various saints and other imaginative people, saying that they have actually seen God. If so, there is absolutely no reason for not publishing such statements, and some have actually been published. What weight can we attach to such statements ? When we consider that a belief in the existence of God would imply the possibility of creating something out of nothing, and various other absurdities, we cannot but consider such statements as hallucinations of disordered minds. This view gains further support from the fact that God always appears to these people in the form in which they are accustomed to worship him : to Hindus in the accoutrements of one of the Hindu gods, to Christians perhaps as a very old man with a flowing grey beard and so on. It simply means that some people dream of gods as others dream of other things or persons, real or imaginary, that they have constantly in mind. Such dreams may sometimes be day-dreams, but they mean nothing at all except psychologically. They prove nothing.

## ● Social Reform

*Miss Paranjpye exposes the futility of superficial social reforms and emphasises the necessity of a critical analysis of our social problems*

# SHORTSIGHTED SOCIAL REFORMS

By **SHAKUNTALA PARANJPYE**

**T**HE civilised world of today seems to realise the need of social reform.

Public spirited people are getting impatient at the slow pace of social progress and attempt with a feverish activity to transform the old order of the world. Even those who studiously refrain from taking any active part in politics are often inspired to work for the social betterment of their country. They witness with pain the prevailing poverty and ignorance of the majority of their countrymen and long to improve their lot. Rural uplift and literacy campaigns appeal to a number of kindly souls. Child welfare and maternity centres move the sympathies of some others. Rescue homes and orphanages engage the attention of still others. Leper asylums and homes for the disabled set some more people working. Whatever be the type of social work chosen by these noble workers, the motivating force behind it is the feeling of pity and kindness which a human heart experiences for his fellow beings. This feeling of commiseration is one of the features of man that distinguish him from other animals. The power of reasoning is another such distinguishing feature. It is up to him now to let the former be guided by the latter ; to take good care

not to let this extravagant feeling of kindness run astray ; to see that in order to satisfy a momentary impulse of pity he does not do any harm to society ; to discourage that kindly emotion which prevents the killing of a viper and allows it to run amuck ; to demonstrate the utter futility and waste in lavishing tons of sugar on myriads of ants while millions of starving human beings could be fed on the money spent on the sugar ; to bring home the stupidity of hoarding bugs in a pound and hiring human beings for them to feed on. These are some of the obvious instances of misguided charity. There are, however, many other instances of misguided charity which are much less obvious. Many philanthropic institutions as they stand, tend to do more harm than good to society. They are conducted no doubt with the best of intentions. Take, for instance, the free maternity and child welfare centres. Such centres have been started all over the country by many official and non-official bodies. Pregnant women receive all medical care at these centres and are delivered free of charge. Then small children are daily fed on milk also free of charge. The schooling charges of these children as they grow up are also nil. In



case of ill-health they are treated at the public hospitals or dispensaries again free of charge. Moreover these little mites start earning their bit of bread at a very early age. In these circumstances is it a wonder if the woman revisits the maternity centre again and again, and the number of children at the adjoining child welfare centre is ever increasing? It costs the mother practically nothing to beget children and bring them up at public cost. These centres, moreover, lay down no conditions whatsoever as regards the social desirability of the individuals to be admitted. Beggar women and criminal women are all to be helped alike, regardless of the fact that their progeny can only serve as centres of infection and must necessarily lower the moral level of society at an accelerating pace. The children of such women again are at full liberty to take advantage of the child welfare centres even though they are only expected to grow up into beggars or criminals. Is it not clear then that such philanthropic institutions ought in the first place to enforce the condition that women seeking their help must be honest citizens? These honest women in their turn should be warned against taking advantage of such centres too often, the importance of family planning should be impressed upon them and the practical methods of birth control should be well explained to each of them. Even after that if a woman wantonly refuses to profit by such advice neither she nor her children should be given any further help. Perhaps a fixed number of conceptions could be allowed to the poor yet disirable kind of women but the undesirable ones should in no way be helped to produce their idle, criminal or unhealthy progeny. How then is one to deal with the kind of women who seek the help of rescue

homes and orphanages? Most of these women have recourse to such institutions only after having unsuccessfully tried every possible method of abortion. They neither want to be rescued nor do they want to see the face of their child. What earthly good is it then, to oblige the unwanted child to be born? Moreover, such children when born seldom survive although the doctors and nurses at these institutions do their utmost to make these unfortunate beings live as long as they possibly can. Now who is to bear the cost of all this expert medical aid wasted on unwanted and unhealthy children who, even if they survive, can only increase the numbers of the lower strata of society? Who is to support these unwelcome children abandoned by their mothers? The public obviously! And again what guarantee is there that the departing mothers would not return to the institution? What then should be done? How should the problem be tackled? Here, too, all women who come to such institutions should be made thoroughly wise as regards the use of contraceptives. Such a measure would practically stop their reappearance at such institutions as they would know how to prevent conception by means of contraceptives, and would no longer get into trouble. This would only partially solve the problem by ensuring against its growth. A radical solution however can only be obtained by legalising abortions in the case of women, unwilling to bear children. A child that is not wanted by the mother ought not to be forced upon her. A human child needs to be looked after for a good many years, and a reluctant mother will never take proper care of it. As a consequence society will have to bear the burden, and although moralists may derive a kind of wicked pleasure by obliging

the sinning woman to bear all the pangs of shame and mortification for bearing an illegitimate child, and even though god-fearing people would proclaim that it is God's justice done unto her (her male partner, curiously enough always escapes these accurate scales of divine justice), it is hardly fair to the innocent child to force it to make its shameful entry into this world and bear its stigma for the rest of its life, and it is even less gain to society to oblige it to bear the burden of such children. Philanthropists and social workers of such institutions therefore would be getting at the very root of the evil if they were to take up the case of getting voluntary abortion legalised. If and when the law allows them, such institutions could provide the necessary medical aid for such operations and thus prevent many an unwanted and undesirable child from being born. Both these suggestions, however, will meet with violent opposition on grounds of morality. Moralists will move heaven and earth, protesting that such action would lead to clandestine relations and immoral intercourse. Personally I believe that sexual relations are entirely a personal affair and no third party should have a say in the matter provided such relations do no harm to society either by inflicting the burden of orphans upon it or by helping to spread disease. To guard against the latter evil, rescue homes and orphanages could also impart information as regards the prevention of disease to all those who seek their help. The adoption of such a policy would be a complete treatment of the problem and would rapidly reduce its volume till it reaches insignificant proportions.

Every social reform must primarily be intended to improve society as a whole

and insure a better generation for the future. Superficial acts of charity which temporarily relieve the mind and ease the conscience of the donor, but which in the long run are harmful to society should find no place in the list of social reforms. Misguided philanthropy which encourages idleness, crime or disease should promptly be discarded. It is therefore highly essential for charitable souls and social workers to observe a problem from all angles and weigh it carefully before undertaking to deal with it.

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## REVIEW

**A New Approach to the Communal Problem**  
by M. N. Roy, pp. 24, published by the  
Radical Democratic Party, at Ratilal  
Mansions, Parekh St., Bombay, 4. Price  
2 annas.

The "communal problem" constantly darkens the social and political horizon of India and impedes all progress. It behoves all serious minded persons sincerely to try and understand it. Whatever differences one may have with Mr. Roy's political line of action it is widely admitted that he is one of the clearest thinkers and most experienced men we have in India today. He is one of those very few men of politics who have openly and fearlessly advocated a secular and rational approach to political questions, as opposed to the religious and mystical one. What he has to say on the "communal problem" deserves consideration and we recommend this little booklet to our readers.

A. S.

# THE LIMIT OF UNREASON

By **AKSHAYAKUMAR R. DESAI.**

**E**VERY event, beneficent or catastrophic, has its own system of causes.

To locate these causes, to induce them if the effect is beneficent to man and combat them if it is disastrous to him, is the task of the scientific thinker and leader of mankind. If the effect is mistraced to a wrong group of causes, the people get a false perspective and their practical effort is misdirected into irrelevant channels.

Natural disasters like flood and earthquake have natural causes. When there is a plethora of rain and its overconcentration in a single zone, floods arise which devastate human life and property, transform cultivated fields into monotonous pools of water and sweep away crops. Earthquakes erupt because the substratum of the earth's surface is still hot and not settled. Periodically, the earth is rocked to and fro, mighty crevices open in its surface and a devastating crumbling of towns and villages occurs destroying human life and labour-created wealth of man in the shape of houses, etc.

Now, it will be the height of intellectual folly, nay, even treason against common-sense, to link these natural disasters with any moral foible in man, with any defect in the social or spiritual structure of man. It would be the acme of absurdity to confound natural causes which give rise to natural phenomena with social laws which bring into existence social events. Floods and earthquakes like volcanoes and cyclones can be explained from the study of the natural state of our earth just as wars, poverty, oppression and cruelty in the human world can be understood only

by the study of the social structure of mankind.

To declare that earthquakes flare up and floods inundate because man misbehaves, is to lose all sense of connections of things, to point out the moon as the creator of daylight, to announce the fall of a meteor as the cause of the birth of a baby. This is human thinking gone mad.

Still, no less persons than Gandhi and his secretary, Mahadev Desai, are engaged periodically in such moonshiny talks. Only recently Mahadev Desai, the perennial recipient of Gandhi's political, ethical and spiritual wisdom, remarked that the Gujarat flood which has worked such havoc, is God's chastisement to the people of Gujarat "for nourishing in their hearts communal hatred and indulging in Hindu-Muslim riots." How murder, arson and loot, perpetrated in the course of communal rioting in Ahmedabad and elsewhere, diverted the direction of movement of the water clouds in the sky to Gujarat and made them release their heavy watery burden in a catastrophic concentrated amount over it, is a problem impossible of solution for the people and non-existent for persons like Mahadev Desai. It is also a puzzle why the heavy rains, the ruthless weapon of God to solve the problem of Hindu-Muslim disunity, did not pour over and batter more drastically the real culprit, viz., the people of Ahmedabad, than the people of Surat and other districts who were, in fact, innocent of any communal rioting. Why were the humans of the Surat section of God's earth and not the human monsters of Ahmedabad,

the real offenders, the target of God's fury?

But M. Desai only follows in the footsteps of the Mahatma. When earthquakes ran rampant in Japan in 1925, Mahatma Gandhi enlightened the world that the disaster was due to the desertion of the Asiatic spiritual mode of life by the Japanese people and their taking to the materialist path of the West. God sent earthquakes to punish Japan for its apostasy. Similarly when, in recent times, Bihar experienced violent earthquake shocks resulting in large scale destruction of human life and property, the all-knowing Mahatma informed the Indian people in general, and the Bihari victims of the earthquake in particular, that God sent the calamity to punish the people for the sin of untouchability!

This false tracing of causes is detrimental to clear scientific thinking by man, which is essential to overcome a disaster or an obstacle either in the social or natural world. If the Mahatma is right in his diagnosis, the people should not take practical engineering steps to avoid these disasters or to minimise their ravages and repairing them rapidly. They should rather concentrate on the campaign of abolishing untouchability and achieving Hindu-Muslim unity. In proportion that the Hindu society is progressively democratized on the basis of extending social rights to the untouchables: and in proportion also that the Hindus and Muslims fraternise and collaborate in the social, political and cultural spheres, the earth will grow more sane, its internal fire will subside and cool down, and the rain clouds will follow a plan of self-dissolution in conformity with the agricultural needs of the Indian people. Almost embarrassingly fine! Is it not?

But since there is no connection between the communal riots and perpetration of social atrocities by the caste Hindus on the despised untouchables on one hand and outbreaks of earthquakes and floods on the other, nothing of this sort happens. Surely, if Untouchability relaxes or vanishes, Hindu society to that extent ceases to be socially oppressive but floods are not averted thereby, since as we have seen floods arise out of excessive concentration of rain clouds over certain terrestrial zones due to the action of monsoon winds.

Similarly, if the Hindus and Muslims unite more and more, even then the earthquakes, which are not the wild fiery offspring of any Hindu-Muslim disunity but the explosive result of the internal tensions of Madame Earth, will not cease. It is good to focus on a programme of accomplishing the unity of the two great communities for a struggle for national freedom and a rich national existence, but there should be no illusion that it forms an integral part of the platform to fight and triumph over floods and earthquakes.

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## NOTICES.

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Members of the Rationalist Association of India who are willing to act as representatives of the Association in different parts of India should please write to the secretaries as early as possible.

Wanted a young rationalist staying in Bombay who can spare an hour on Sundays or some weekday.

Wanted a portable typewriter for the use of the R. A. I. Office.

We have no printed catalogue of books. All books published by Watts & Co. and the Pioneer Press London are available through the R. A. I. Books are advertised from time to time in *Reason*.

# MATERIALISM AND SPIRITUALISM

By M. N. ROY

(Reproduced from *Art and Culture*)

THE social and political problems confronting our nation to-day have their roots stuck deep in a historical and cultural background. Therefore they cannot be solved as easily as many expect. In order to cure the evils their causes must be discovered and eradicated. That is Radicalism. When we choose to call ourselves "radical" we shoulder the responsibility of performing a task which, in addition to being difficult, is sure to be disagreeable to many who may frown upon our critical attitude and iconoclastic tendency. So we must realise the magnitude of the responsibility we propose to assume. Radicalism is more than mere political extremism. Radicalism is a philosophy; it is the philosophy of revolution. And revolution does not mean only a change in the political administration of a country. It is a more far reaching event. It replaces a decayed social order by a new one. Each social order has a philosophy of its own; its subversion therefore must be preceded by a critique of its philosophy. To offer the criticism of the philosophy of a decayed social system, doomed to disappear so that a higher form of human relations could be established, is the function of radicalism.

If we wish to perform that function creditably, we must be clear of one or two points which confuse all organisations and specially the youth movement. For one thing, it must be realised that youth is not a homogeneous social unit. Therefore, there is no such thing as the ideal of youth. Yet we hear so much about this non-existing thing. Hence all the confusion

that prevents the youth movement from bearing any fruit.

The youth are not a social unit, because all the classes of society are represented in that age group. The classes have conflicting interests, and, therefore, contradictory ideals. Identity of age cannot eliminate the diversity of interests and disparity of ideals. So the youth movement must find a common platform other than age. That platform is *radicalism*, that is, a critical approach to all established ideas and ideals. It can be reactionary. Unfortunately, the great bulk of the Indian youth is still inspired by ideas and ideals which stand in the way of progress. Only as the standard-bearer of radicalism, can the youth movement serve a useful purpose. Therefore, I shall devote my article to a criticism of the ideas and ideals which must be rejected before our nation can enter into a new period of cultural progress and economic prosperity. The proposed criticism may not be relished by all and sundry. But the truth must be told, and who can do that better than the radical youth? I shall not appeal to their emotion, but to their intellect. I shall not stimulate their feelings, but quicken their reason. Only as independent thinkers, guided rather by reason than by sentiment, shall they be able to find the correct approach to the social and political problems that they shall have to face and solve as the future citizens of free India.

The radical youth must be rationalist, realist, iconoclastic. The architects of the future must be rebels against the past. They must revolt against tradition and

authority. Knowledge must replace faith, in their philosophy. Nationalism, to be fruitful, must break away from revivalism.

A characteristic common to Indian nationalists of all shades and schools is the antipathy for Western civilisation. It is but natural that reactionary religionists should have that antipathy, because the essence of the so-called Western civilisation is rationalism and scientific knowledge which, dispelling the bliss of ignorance blasts the basis of religion. But it is curious that liberal reformers should stultify themselves ideologically as well as politically by disavowing the admiration for a course of socio-cultural development which they must follow if they are true to their professions and principles. Even people with a more or less decidedly progressive outlook start with the declaration that they are not admirers of the accursed Western civilisation, whenever they criticise the established social customs and institutions of our country. These half-hearted reformers are loud in their disapproval of Western civilisation, even when advocating the introduction of social and political institutions associated with it. For example, they would give Indian women freedom and education enjoyed by their sisters in Europe and America, but would not let them abandon the "ideals of Indian womanhood," would not let them be contaminated by the "abuse" of freedom; they would abolish the caste system, but would remain loyal to the traditions of a culture based upon that social institution; they would have the benefits of capitalism, but would guard against the masses becoming "greedy as in the West"; they would get rid of the grossly superstitious aspects of religion and encourage a rationalist view of life, but would not regard experimental science

as the only source of knowledge, and would retain religion in its "pure" form, that is to say, rationalise irrationalism.

Such is the attitude even of those who grudgingly admit that there is something wrong in Indian society, and are distressed not to find the remedy in the empty tradition of the past. They find it difficult to reject altogether the achievements of Western civilisation, which is the most positive outcome of human progress, yet they do not have the courage to break away from the old and embrace the new. Theirs is the theory of the so-called synthesis, a compromise between progress and reaction, a precarious ideological structure to be reared on the fictitious foundation of the "spiritual genius of India." Sinful Western civilisation would be admitted into the holy temple of Mother India after it has performed the ceremony of *Prayaschitta*, so to say. The sinful institution is not altogether rejected, because it has so much earthly advantage to offer. But it must be purified with the alloy of Eastern spiritualism. The proud spokesmen of this curious theory, which can be characterised as "spiritualist imperialism" do not know what they are talking about. They expound the doctrine of synthesis with a show of philosophic wisdom. But what do they actually propose? An impossibility: it is not possible to make a harmonious combination of two mutually exclusive systems of culture and forms of thoughts not merely associated with the opposite points of the compass, but belonging to two different historical epochs, centuries apart.

Indian criticism of Western civilisation does not mean rejection of capitalism. Indian nationalists do not reject capitalism as such. Their criticism is not directed against its real evils—its reactionary,

degrading, degenerating features in this period of decay. They reject precisely what is good in capitalist civilisation. Culturally, the positive outcome of capitalism has been the tremendous advance of science, in theory as well as in practice, an advance which has prepared the ground for the final liberation of man from his age-long spiritual bondage.

The basic evil of capitalist civilisation, in the cultural aspect, has been the systematic and persistent attempt to block the spiritual evolution of man. This was done by protecting and fostering religion (of course, in a modernised form when necessary), idealist philosophy and all sorts of associated obscurantist metaphysical speculations just when the triumphal march of scientific knowledge was disrupting the foundation of these relics of the dark ages. Yet, curiously enough, "Materialism" is held, by Indian nationalists, to be the fundamental sin of Western civilisation. As a matter of fact, the situation is just the reverse. Materialist philosophy is a bugbear no less hated and combated by the ruling classes of the West than by the Indian nationalists. Why? Because materialist philosophy is the mighty instrument for the spiritual liberation of mankind. This weapon, originally hammered out roughly by the great thinkers of antiquity, has been perfected in the course of capitalist development. All fighters for freedom and honest advocates of progress, therefore, should appreciate Western civilisation as the most brilliant chapter of human history. Only avowed reactionaries holding fast to an antiquated culture can decry that imposing monument of human progress.

(To be continued)

## NOTES AND NEWS.

We are receiving many valuable suggestions from friends for which we are very thankful. We hope more of our readers and members would do the same. They will receive the careful consideration of the Executive Committee and will we are sure go a great way in strengthening the R. A. I. Many have also expressed appreciation of the get up and printing of *Reason*. Thanks are due to our member Mr. Akbar Frosh who bore the expenses of the blocks, etc., necessary for the cover page.

\* \* \*

We are pleased to note that the popular Secretary of the Rationalist Press Association of London has been nominated to the British Cabinet. The local papers here describe him as "a champion of unpopular causes." We know Mr. Thurtle has been a fearless spokesman but were unaware that he was "a champion of unpopular causes," if by that is meant "Rationalism," which we do not think is an unpopular cause in England.

\* \* \*

The mails are not regular and we do not receive rationalist publications from abroad even in chronological order. It is indeed with deep regret we learn that the office of the *Freethinker* of London has been completely destroyed. It speaks much for those responsible for the *Freethinker* that with all these well nigh overwhelming difficulties it has not missed a single issue.

\* \* \*

We gratefully acknowledge the following: Dr. C. R. Athavle, Rs. 5; Dr. Prem Nath, Panipat, Rs. 5; Krishen Dev, Lahore, Rs. 5; R. S. Aiyanger, Rs. 5; Banwari Lal Sharma, Gujrat, Rs. 5; Dr. A. C. Ukil, Calcutta, Rs. 5; G. L. Koppikar, Rs. 5.

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# YOGA

By G. L. KOPPIKAR

**T**HE present essay is an attempt to explain what the word yoga—a word, among many other Sanskrit words, completely misunderstood—means.

The growth of the Sanskrit language may be compared to that of a man. In its infancy, it babbled. Every syllable had a meaning, and every word in a seed form gave the meaning of the universe, known and unknown. As a child calls ba, ba, everybody, everything from heaven to hell was called by the same syllable or word. The words were few, and there was no other language to borrow words from in prehistoric times. Keeping these facts in mind, we cannot accept the meaning of a word as the only meaning, simply because it has been accepted by others, without inquiring into its correctness and finding out the real meaning. Blind acceptance would only betray either a smug indifference or a stupid ignorance on our part.

Yoga was a word which originally meant when split into its derivative syllables yah and gam, the way to go. When a youth went after a girl, his act was called yoga, and he a yogi. When a warrior went forward leading behind him an army, his act was called yoga, and he a yogi. And so on *ad infinitum*. The word yoga was not surrounded by a halo, and it simply meant the way to go. A man like Columbus was called a yogi. In course of time, yoga meant the way to perfection, and a yogi was the embodiment of perfection.

The current interpretation of the word yoga as union with God is conjectural in the light of what we have said above. In his Gita, Krishna describes 18 yogas. There can be as many yogas, however, as there are stars in the firmament.

That which represents perfection is a yogi. In the mineral kingdom, gold is a

yogi; in the vegetable, mango is a yogi; in the animal, man is a yogi. In the world, gold rules us. We suffer without it. Even yogis, with whom bringing about union of their disciples with God is a speciality, are in need of it. Nobody cares for a poor yogi. The efforts made to realize God should be directed to realize gold. The letter "I" has to be inserted into the word G o d between o and d. Among men, a banker is a yogi; among women, a beautiful woman is a yogi; among intellectuals, a scientist is a yogi.

Our formula: All can become yogis in their sphere of life by developing their innate powers to their highest possibilities. Any other is misleading and destructive.

## WHAT YOGAS MEAN.

Adhyatma Yoga is the way to introspection.

Akshara Brahma Yoga is the way to indefatigable creative energy.

Bhakti Yoga is the way to devotion.

Buddhi Yoga is the way to the intellect.

Deha Yoga is the way to the body.

Devasura Yoga is the way to good and evil.

Dhyana Yoga is the way to contemplation.

Jada Yoga is the way to weightiness.

Japa Yoga is the way to memory.

Karma Yoga is the way to action.

Kshetra Kshetradnya Yoga is the way to physiological and psychological knowledge.

Laya Yoga is the way to dissolution.

Manasika Yoga is the way to the mind.

Mukti Yoga is the way to freedom.

Prema Yoga is the way to Cupid.

Purushottama Yoga is the way to the superman.

Raja Yoga is the way to nobility.

Sankhya Yoga is the way to reason.

Sanyasa Yoga is the way to detachment.

Satsanga Yoga is the way to noble company.

Shraddha Yoga is the way to faith.

Siddhi Yoga is the way to success.

Triguna (Satva, Rajas and Tamas) Yoga is the way to wisdom, wealth and women.

Vibhuti Yoga is the way to fortune.

Vishada Yoga is the way to despondency.

Vishwarupa Darshana Yoga is the way to the Titan.

Vraha Yoga is the way to gaiety through grief.

Vratya Yoga is the way to Harijan uplift.



There is no wealth but life

—Emerson.

# REASON

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## DEW DROPS

The belief that certain people are gifted with supernatural powers is widespread in India. It is shared by Hindoos, Mahomedans, Parsees, Christians and others alike. It varies in inverse proportion to the spread of scientific knowledge. Very often we hear how some people are duped by cunning rascals who prey on the credulity of these superstitious people.

One of the common methods of these impostors is to make people believe that they can duplicate currency notes by magic, and, strange as it may seem, despite the frequent occasions when these methods have been exposed, people are duped very often. We know of a Mahomedan who was duped to the extent of fifty thousand rupees by one of these rogues who seem to thrive on this kind of imposture.

The papers related some days ago that a Christian has reported to the Police that one of these swindlers did him in the eye for the sum of Rs. 400. It appears that the man made him believe that a treasure worth a lakh of rupees was buried under his house and that the same was guarded by serpents in the good old style of Indian fairy tales. The so-called magician assured him that by his supernatural powers he would put him in possession of the same.

The Christian who appeared to be of a mental age low enough to swallow this nonsense fell in with that story.

\* \* \* \*

To begin with, the rogue wanted Rs. 150 for preliminary expenses to buy the necessary paraphernalia to invoke the spirits, then an equal sum was required to feed Brahmins, which the Christian duly gave. It appears that the impostor actually dug a hole in the house and showed the Christian a big pot full of glittering objects and even pulled out a descendant of Eve's tempter to show that his story was true. After this he got more money from the Christian and then made himself scarce. The Christian then realized that he had been duped.

\* \* \* \*

A state of mind which is necessary for a belief in the miraculous, the supernatural and the mysterious and which is encouraged by believers in religion is responsible for the victimization of people by rogues and charlatans who know how credulous these people are in this matter.

\* \* \* \*

There is also a case reported in the *Lahore Tribune* of a European lady, one Mrs. T. Marshal of Ichhra, who was duped by a mendicant.

It is alleged that one day she was sitting in her house in Ichhra when a mendicant appeared and begged for alms. Suddenly he looked at the lady and told her that she was under the spell of some evil influence. She was impressed by him and at the suggestion of the beggar accompanied him to a canal. There he gave her a tumbler full of milk and water and asked her to put her gold ring in it. She did as she was told. He then took her to a grave and directed her to wait at a short distance. He took the tumbler from the

lady and went round the grave several times. He returned the tumbler to her and left, saying that she should take out the ring after a few minutes. When he was gone, she found the ring missing.

\* \* \* \*

The god of wisdom has forsaken his followers. It is reported that at Dombeoli a Ganpati has disappeared on the day previous to the one on which he was to be immersed. It appears that the Brahmins of the locality wanted their priest to officiate while the non-Brahmins wanted their own. Now each group is blaming the other for the disappearance of the Gaṇpati. The matter has been reported to the police. We feel that the Ganpati has shown singular wisdom and impartiality, and wonder how people cannot recognise a miracle when they see one.

\* \* \* \*

By the time this issue reaches readers there will have been another day of National Prayer on the 7th September to commemorate the second anniversary of the war. We are a little suspicious of these days of prayer considering the sequels that have followed previous ones. It is to be hoped that no new disaster will follow this one. We do not suppose the Russians depend much on prayer as a secret weapon in their struggle with Germany. They rightly depend on their skill and preparedness to deal with the Germanic odds, and do not believe in wallowing in religion as some people do. Well, it takes humanity a tremendous long time to learn common sense despite bitter experience.

Abraham Solomon.

It requires no great courage to champion either an established institution, or a movement that is making headway. The value of a man is to be gauged by the number of forlorn causes he champions. There is heroism in isolation.

Chapman Cohen.

# THE AUTHOR OF THE BHAGAVAD-GITA

*By* **R. D. KARVE.**

ON the 15th of August, India celebrated the birthday of Shri Krishna, the eighth incarnation of Vishnu and the supposed author of the Bhagavad-Gita, in which he declares that he incarnates himself periodically for the purpose of protecting the good, destroying the wicked and establishing religion. One of the wicked people he wanted to destroy was his own mother's brother, Kansa, who was oppressing the world. Just after the marriage of Kansa's sister Devaki to Wasudev, while he was driving them to their destination in his own chariot, a voice from the skies warned him that a son of this same sister was going to kill him. Why the gods should be so stupid as to warn him, it is difficult to understand. Or perhaps they could not control that voice from the sky, which occurs very frequently in Sanscrit literature and the author of this mysterious voice is never mentioned. Any way, as soon as Kansa heard this warning his natural reaction was to kill his sister immediately and so nullify this prophecy. But fate willed it otherwise. Wasudev argued with him that it was hardly very heroic to kill a woman, who also happened to be his sister, and so he spared her, but he kept the couple in close confinement and under surveillance and exacted a promise from them that every child would be handed over to him as soon as it was born. He thus killed seven of their children in succession, and Krishna was the eighth. By what miracle was he saved? There are various versions of the story.

Apparently it was below the dignity of a god to remain in the womb for nine months and he did not actually submit to this torture. Though Devaki appeared to be pregnant, her womb contained nothing but air, and at the 10th month, Krishna manifested himself to his parents in his godly form, with four hands and other godly attributes. When they had worshipped him in this form, he suddenly became a child. After this, they had to find a way of cheating Kansa. Krishna was born at midnight on the eighth day after full moon in the lunar month of Shravana, at Mathura (or Muttra as railway time-tables call it). His father immediately decided to smuggle him away into Gokul. Naturally, everything was favourable. The gablers were asleep, locks opened of their own accord, the waters of the Jumna rose tumultuously to meet the child-god riding on the shoulders of Wasudeva, but went down immediately on touching his foot, so that Wasudeva could cross easily. He took the child to Nanda in Gokul, who had fortunately a daughter just born, with whom Krishna was exchanged, and in the morning this daughter was handed over to Kansa as the newly born child of Devaki, who pleaded that Kansa should spare her at least this child. But he was determined to take no chances and was about to dash her on a stone, when she suddenly slipped out of his hands and appeared in the sky. She told Kansa that Devaki's eighth child was safe in Gokul. Enraged at being cheated, he ordered a general massacre of children

in Gokul and sent several special emissaries with orders to kill Krishna by fair means or foul. However, the child-god outmanoeuvred Kansa and ultimately killed him with his own hands in single combat.

Krishna is undoubtedly the most popular of Indian gods, and the secret of his popularity is not far to seek. Archaeologists may say anything about the present popular idea of Krishna being really a combination of three distinct historical personages, as indicated by three utterly distinct phases of his life: the hero of innumerable love stories, the intrepid warrior whose exploits are also attributed to him, and the philosopher of the Bhagavad-Gita. But this is precisely why he is so popular. An ideal lover, an ideal warrior and an ideal philosopher; what else can anybody desire?

He was once prosecuted and convicted for daring to say that Krishna had set an example of adultery, and the trying magistrate stated in court that such a joke about Krishna was "obscene" and therefore punishable under the law, which, by the way, gives no definition of obscenity and leaves it to the discretion of the magistrate. But I never intended any joke. Krishna's adulterous love for the Gopis, the wives of the cowherds of Gokul, forms the theme of innumerable love songs in Hindi and is sung all over India by Hindu and Muslim musi-

cians. Of course religious fanatics who object to love try to give a fanciful spiritual interpretation of these love-stories, but their sense is quite plain to the ordinary reader and there is never any hint of spiritualism in them. The authors of the "History of Prostitution in India" emphatically support me. "From Vishnu, Devi Bhagavata and other Puranas, it transpires that Krishna was already a passionate lover at an age when our boys of today have hardly

forgotten their bibs and pinafores. His sound intrigues, his cunning devices, his seductive flute, his all-evasive trysts, his rampant love adventures and hypnotic influence with all the maids and respectable ladies of the neighbourhood of Gokul and Vraja are too well-known to our readers to admit of further enumeration here." (Vol. I, p. 135).

It must not be forgotten that Radha, whose name is so often coupled with that of Krishna was the wife of one of the Gopas or cowherds in Gokul. In addition to these innumerable mistresses, Krishna is supposed to have had 16,108 legitimate wives in his harem, a number that would take some time even to count. But hardly any of these wives are as frequently mentioned as Radha in connection with Krishna. His devotees speak of Radha-Krishna as if it was one word, never of Rukmini-Krishna, though Rukmini was one of his favourite wives. In his previous incarnation he was known as Rama and set an example of austerity and righteousness, and Rama is popularly supposed to have been faithful to his one wife, Sita. How far his righteousness is consistent with modern ideas, readers may judge from Mr. Nadkarni's "Rama-Rajya" just published by the Rationalist Association. What is surprising is that in his next incarnation he should indulge in such an excess of wives and mistresses.

But to serious people, his greatest achievement is the Bhagavad-Gita, which forms part of the Mahabharata, the greatest epic in the world, not excepting the Iliad and the Odyssey, which look like feeble imitations in comparison. It is the story of the conflict between the five Pandava brothers on one side and their cousins, the hundred Kaurava brothers on the other side.

(Please turn to page 147)

# WILL THE INQUISITION RETURN?

## HOW THE STIFLING OF FREE THOUGHT RUINED SPAIN

By A. G. MACDONELL

The following article which appeared in *John O'London's Weekly* of November 11, 1938 will be of interest to our readers.

IT is some years now since the last activities of the Inquisition flickered out in Tuscany and the Papal States, but the theory and principle of the Holy Office still exist. The basis of it is the right of the Pope to punish all baptized Christians, whether Catholics, or Protestants for heresy, and the claim to the right has never been abandoned. The great Lord Acton wrote of the Inquisition: "It is peculiarly the weapon and peculiarly the work of the Popes. No other institution, no doctrine, no ceremony is so distinctly the individual creation of the Papacy, except the Dispensing Power. It is the principal thing with which the Papacy is identified, and by which it must be judged. The principle of the Inquisition is the Pope's sovereign power over life and death." And Lord Acton goes on to coin a neat phrase when he writes that "a man's opinion of the Papacy is regulated and determined by his opinion about religious assassination." *Scholar and humanist*

This is the institution which Professor G. G. Coulton examines in his *Inquisition and Liberty* (Heinemann, 15s.), and it is only necessary to mention the author's name to imply that the book is an important work of scholarship, learning, and labour. But it is more. It is a sociological book as well. For Dr. Coulton examines the working of the Holy Office from the point of view of the man in the street, so to speak, rather than from the rarefied heights of Canon Law. He is concerned with its effect upon the lives of the people and, in order to estimate

and appreciate this effect, he must understand the lives of the people as closely as is possible after so long an interval.

Dr. Coulton begins with the growth of Nonconformity in the eleventh century, when the world was staggering out of the chaos of the Dark Ages. As society slowly revived after so much suffering, so many wars, so many pestilences and famines, men began to think for themselves again and heresy reared its head.

### *The Legacy of Darkness*

In earlier days there had been heresies and persecutions, but there had been a great deal of tolerance also.

There were still great churchmen who believed in tolerance. St. Hilary of Poitiers, in 365, deplored the gradual revolution which had brought an Apostolic brotherhood of sufferers into a newer institution of persecutors for the Faith.

But in the eleventh century the legacy of Darkness was violence, and the civil magistrates and the populace "were ready to second the Church authorities, and sometimes to outstrip them."

It was in Spain, appropriately, that the story began, just as it was in Spain that it culminated and ended. Priscillian, Bishop of Avila, was the first heresiarch to be put to death for the crime of heresy pure and simple, but not until the days of Aberlady and the revival of classical learning did heresy become "something much more than sporadic." Up to that time,

There was nothing even approaching an official and definite Church law as to the punishment of heretics. Lynch law, with or without clerical encouragement, supplied a rule-of-thumb policy; these sporadic tares were violently uprooted wherever they grew up.

#### *Organizing the faithful*

But now this was no longer good enough and the Albegensian heresy opened the eyes of the Church to the necessity of organization. In 12-15 Innocent III made it a definite law at the Lateran Council that every orthodox Christian should seek out and exterminate heretics, and eighteen years later Gregory IX formally handed over the organizing of the work to the Dominicans, and the Inquisition was founded.

Dr. Coulton describes the characteristics of the Inquisition, with its procedure that reads like something out of a monstrous bedlam. Every conceivable weight was loaded into the dice against the prisoner and acquittal was almost unknown. The trial was secret; the records were never published; the names of hostile witnesses were concealed; advocates were not allowed to help alleged heretics; and so on. The penalties for convicted heretics were three—imprisonment, torture, and death—and the details of the hideous severity with which these were applied are sufficiently well known. They do not need to be dwelt upon. It is enough to say that the conditions of imprisonment under the Holy Office were almost certainly no worse than in any seignorial, baronial, or monarchical dungeon; and that the application of the other two sentences was much worse.

#### *New heresies invented*

As the years went on, more and more heresies were manufactured by the Popes,

and the use of torture was more and more ruthlessly enforced. Thus Pope John XXII, concerning whose vices Gibbon has a celebrated passage, invented two new heresies, and Clement V "sent a series of bulls to realm after realm, pressing the need of obtaining confessions by torture, which in some places had been negligently and imprudently omitted. All were to send him, as soon as possible, the evidence thus collected. The result was not only that some were racked who had been hitherto spared, but others were brought from prison to be 'questioned' afresh. At Nîmes, 'some had already been tortured three years before; but now all were tortured again with the result of obtaining the kind of testimony required, including demon-worship.' "

A sinister turn was given to the Inquisition when politics began to intrude. There was nothing but politics in the trial of the Templars. Heresy was not a real issue. Even more celebrated as a political monstrosity was the inquisitorial trial of Joan of Arc, and Savonarola's offence was not heresy but a passionate desire to reform the Church and Society.

#### *Spies and embezzlers*

But though the Inquisition was powerful in France and Italy, it was in Spain that it came to its full power. It became part of the national life of the country. "The modern Spaniard owes as much to this institution, whether by attraction or by repulsion, as Britain does to her parliamentary constitution."

And as it grew in strength, so it grew in hideousness and terror. The spy-system became universal. "No man was safe from his neighbours, his servants, or even his children." The Inquisitors became embezzlers on the grand scale and bribed

the Spanish Treasury if any particularly unpleasant scandal seemed likely to be exposed. And there certainly were plenty of scandals which might at any moment have been exposed. The expulsion of the Jews at the end of the fifteenth century, with only a few months' notice, was one of the most formidable, and at the same time most lucrative, of the inquisitorial exploits in Spain, and the second expulsion, that of the Mariscos, brought down the severe condemnation of so zealous an anti-Protestant as Cardinal Richelieu.

#### *A decaying society*

The blighting effect of the stranglehold of the Inquisition upon Spain took only about a hundred years to reach its deadliest. "The startling rapidity with which Spanish society decayed after about 1600, in spite of the natural qualities of the population, has become a commonplace of history." Learning was destroyed and liberty of thought was non-existent. "Grammar schools were few, and busied with little else than superficial preparation for the priesthood. Among the monks and priests themselves, there were many who could not read or write."

So Spain gradually sank, and Elizabeth's ships smashed the Armada, and Gustaus Adolphus came down from the Protestant north with his Protestant phalanx. The eighteenth century made the Inquisition look ridiculous, and Napoleon contemptuously swept it away in Italy.

#### *The principle survives*

But, as I said at the beginning of this article, the principle of the Holy Office remains untouched. The Pope still, in theory, has the power of life and death over non-conforming Christians. And as Dr. Coulton writes, "if any State ever became again a hundred per cent. Catholic, it is difficult to see how it could avoid not merely the

possibility, but even the moral compulsion, of reintroducing the principles, if not the whole methods, of the mediaeval Inquisition."

And what is the conclusion of the story?

Was the Inquisition justified? Had it a defence? Or an explanation? If its acts were often the acts of a criminal lunatic, was there a reason? Dr. Coulton cannot be suspected of a Catholic bias, and any defence of the Holy Office which he puts forward must be regarded with the deference due to fair-mindedness. He says in effect: the Church had absorbed millions of semicivilized barbarians. Independence of thought by these barbarians might swiftly have led to a chaos darker than the Darkest Ages. The Church alone stood for Light. Heretics often invited violence by the violence of their own deeds. Throughout the ages, "the claim of any tiny faction of the community not only to thwart the actions of the rest, but also to use godly violence against them," has always provoked brutal reprisals, and the Inquisition was only rather worse in the degree of its brutality.

#### *A fatal mistake*

But, even allowing for the savagery of the times, Dr. Coulton can only conclude that "the experience of later generations suggests that it would have been wiser in the Church to have made no appeal to force, but only to argument and good example."

The Totalitarian Church of the Middle Ages used the same sort of methods as the Totalitarian States of the twentieth century, and liberal-minded men and women can find much to deplore in both. Dr. Coulton is a formidable fighter in the cause of liberal mindedness because his fair-mindedness allows him to present his opponents' cause properly before demolishing it.

**RATIONALISM STANDS FOR**  
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# IS RELIGION CORRODING INDIAN POLITICS?

*By* **MOHAN NADKARNI.**

**T**HERE was a time when religion dominated everything; and the man who had the pluck to defy its often mysterious and strange laws was thought worthy only of the stake. Even the mighty kings were mere puppets in the hands of those who thought themselves the guardians of religion on this earth; and the sands of the none too stable politics shifted their course this way or that according to the dictates of religion.

But all this happened long ago. And we have every right to believe that after centuries of struggle, men, after all, have wiped off the halo that surrounded our religion and proved what it really is—a misbegotten creation of the ignorant, terrified mind; a child of superstition and the mother of ignorance.

But this our strong belief seems to be a little shaken when we see that the greatest man of this century and of India looks on religion as a staff to lean upon when politics seems to crumble, and a sustaining hope to bewildered humanity when civilization seems to perish. This phenomenal importance attached by Gandhiji to religion seems ridiculous in the twentieth century when, as a matter of fact, we ought to be 'liquidating' this 'opiate of the people.' But instead we are forced to see a spectacle, at once so strange and shocking, where religion decides not only ordinary human relations but also claims to solve the intricate problems of politics.

Whether religion should be mixed with politics is a question that is debatable

for all except Gandhiji. What might seem a right attitude for a saint might look equally ridiculous for a politician. But Gandhiji has more than once proclaimed that he is both a saint and a politician as the occasion demands. We do not want to question his claim, for we know that as a saint he is too slippery, as a politician too vague.

But according to his own confession he is more of a saint than a politician. And his numerous followers also take him in the same light. The truth of this can easily be ascertained if one only takes a glance at Gandhiji's photos plastered on the wall with almost devotional fervour.

Everything that surrounds Gandhiji conveys the air more of religion than politics. His headquarters bear a religious name—Ashram. His bearing and mode of life are those of a Sadhu. And even his political moves are made by the inspiration gathered from religious books. He never or seldom dictates, but often preaches; because he knows that a people who have terrifying reverence for religion are better preached at than dictated to. We might remind our readers that one of the most important things in the C. D. movements was the principle of Truth and Non-Violence—a befitting plank for an ash-covered Sadhu to make his stand.

But this religious twist that was given to Indian politics has already ruined the country. Men of questionable ability have assumed the highest position in the Congress mainly because they had more faith than brains. And this motley horde of followers,



bound, not by any political faith, but by flimsy religious sentiments, have turned the Congress, the greatest and the strongest organisation in India, into a Bhajan Mandali, rather than a political Party. Here we must remind the readers that we are not exaggerating for melodramatic effect. It is a sore truth.

Thus unfortunately for India religion has once again stolen a destructive march over politics. What had been the concern mainly of the soul has now become that of the body politics. Also most of Gandhiji's political precepts are nothing but religious utterances pure and simple. For example, he wants us to live a life as simple as that of a farmer—live on two annas a day only. Our dress should be simple—preferably as scanty as possible. And it would be better if you do not pay any attention to it. Then again, you should not harbour any malice or enmity even against your enemy; and at all times your actions should be guided by Truth. The sheet anchor of your philosophy should not be a faith in a fixed principle or any 'ism' but in Non-violence—a religious doctrine that has become obsolete since Buddha propounded it centuries ago.

With so much religion mixed with so little politics, Gandhiji did not know that he was launching a new idea in politics which would have disastrous effects. Each time he gave out a confession, he ought to have found this out. But he didn't, or couldn't; and he went on producing those mysterious confessions of his guilt which were more baffling than the guilt itself.

Thus Gandhiji gave an unwholesome lead and the other Indian politicians were not slow to pick up the thread. Both Mr. Jinnah and Mr. Savarkar fight politics on religious grounds. Each wants that his religion should be dominant. While Mr. Jinnah wants that his 100,000,000 followers

and co-religionists should have a separate haven in the northern part of the country, on the other hand Mr. Savarkar strongly urges that the whole of India, as a matter of birthright, should belong only to the Hindus—except of course the Englishmen.

How dangerous it is to allow these two major Indian religions to fight their own battles, every leader of history knows. Are we going to allow a religious war to start in our country whose tendency towards other religions is always distinguished by love and sympathy? If in time we do not check this religious tinge in politics, if we do not blockade the wild enthusiasm of religious fanatics, then there is every fear that we might expect here a carbon copy of the horrors that are perpetrated in Europe. Whatever wars Indians may fight, religious wars she should not. We know the long-standing tragedy, the devastating hatred, that this war brings with it.

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# MATERIALISM AND SPIRITUALISM

*By* **M. N. ROY**

(Continued from page 131)

We hear much about the "spiritualist" genius of India; but none takes the pain of establishing the thesis. It passes as an axiomatic truth, an article of faith. Nevertheless, the critical student must enquire whether the claim regarding the spiritual nature of Indian culture has any historical foundation, if it is borne by historical facts. The enquiry reveals that what is regarded the special genius of India is not special at all; a spiritualism, that is, the religious form of thought, is the characteristic feature of every human community at a certain stage of social evolution. Modes of thought change in accordance with the variation of social environments, and, consequently, no particular way of thinking can be the eternal characteristic of a certain people. If India tenaciously holds on to a particular mode of thought, which has become antiquated, which has been rejected, reformed or camouflaged by the Western nations, that is not because India is more spiritual and the latter are morally depraved by nature, and, as such, have not been able to remain on that higher level of ideology. It simply proves that advance of civilisation—continuous process of the conquest of nature by man—has enabled those nations to think more in terms of reason and positive knowledge than in terms of faith and metaphysical abstraction. It simply proves that change in the conditions of life, inevitably revolutionises ideas. Similar changes did not take place in India; therefore the Indian people could not outgrow the religious mode of thought, which was disrupted in the Western world by the rise of modern

science. The revolutionary transformation of the conditions of life, experienced by the nations of the West, has created the gulf that separates them ideologically from the people of India. Subject India to a similar revolutionary transformation and the gulf will close up in no time. Ignorance will be dispelled by knowledge. Faith will be replaced by reason.

Believers in the spiritual genius of India would exclaim, "Oh! that is precisely what we want to avoid." They would ask challengingly, "Is not this desire born of our innate spiritualistic inclination? Unless Indians were by nature spiritualistic how could they resist the temptation of travelling the road of worldly welfare?" But the question is, was it by choice that India shunned the road taken by the wayward peoples of the West? Is she really resisting the temptation even today? The least regard for the facts of history and the realities of the present situation compel one to answer the question decisively in the negative. The nationalist movement, our striving for political freedom, proves that the Indian people are just as much concerned with worldly welfare as any other people. We strive for political freedom because that will enable us to catch up the social progress of several hundred years that separates us from the Western nations. The historical task of Indian nationalism is precisely to realise that which its prevalent ideology disclaims. If that is not so, there is no sense in our struggle for political freedom. If that is not so, then let them demonstrate their spirituality.

by bearing the cross of political slavery and the resulting economic backwardness. Either their spirituality is a sham or their nationalism is a mistake.

If the concern for the physical necessities of life is materialism, then the Indian people are as materialistic as any other people. No rational person can ever dispute the fact that to subsist and reproduce are the common characteristics of every organism. The human being, endowed with intelligence, naturally tries to perform these biological functions under the most favourable conditions. The ability to create such conditions and to improve them progressively separates man from the lower animals. To dispute this view would be to maintain that the cave dweller is the idle being. Once the biological necessity for comfort is admitted, any limit to it can be set only arbitrarily. Who is to determine where the line is to be drawn? The Scriptures do not draw any line. They sanction materialism in the sense of the desire to subsist, reproduce and acquire worldly goods.

*Dharma, artha, kama moksha*—these, according to the Scriptures, are the four-fold ideals of human life. Sandwiched piously between *dharma* and *moksha*, *artha* and *kama* do not cease to mean what they are. Acquisition of worldly goods (*artha*) as well as sexual enjoyment (or desire in general) are not only sanctioned scripturally, but are recognised as objects of human existence on an equal footing with *dharma* and even *moksha*. The Mahabharat gives the most elaborate and comprehensive exposition of *dharma*. There we read that, "*artha* and *kama* are derived from *dharma*." This very significant declaration is made by no less an authority than Vyas himself. The saintly injunction textually is: "Be religious, and you

shall have all the pleasure of the world." Mind, the reward for the observance of religious laws and practices is not salvation of the soul but pleasure of the world. Who would still maintain that concern for worldly goods is a characteristic of the materialist West? In the same context, the Mahabharat tells us something more interesting. Having made the above declaration, Vyas laments that "none listens to me." This proves that in the very golden age of the spiritual civilisation of India, the pursuit of *artha* and *kama* was not even restricted by *dharma*. As regards *kama* the *Brahma Suttras* declare: "The sexual instinct is germinal in the child, and obtains full expression when the proper age comes." It is not at all difficult to reconstruct what is left unsaid in this connection. Sex impulse being natural, it must be satisfied. *Dharma* does not prohibit this. Finally, according to the *Gita* God operates as the rightful desire in all creatures. Rightful, means permissible by *dharma*. *Dharma*, in this context, evidently means social codes which, in a certain stage of human development, are everywhere couched in religious terms, and derive the authority from assumed or imaginary divine or heavenly sanctions.

One must acquire worldly goods and satisfy sexual urge (enjoy the pleasure of physical life generally) under certain conditions laid down by the laws of the established society: that is the injunction of Indian culture. Is it any more spiritualist or any less materialist than the code of social conduct of any other civilised people? Highway robbery as a means of acquiring wealth and caveman's method of winning his mate are no more practised in the Western countries than in India, either of to-day or of the past. The Western peoples' pursuit of *artha* and *kama* is

also governed by laws. And what they accept as the limitation of their natural urge is essentially the same as *dharma* of the Indians. Whether they are religious injunctions, or moral codes, or civil laws, in the last analysis, the limitations can be reduced to the good old Ten Commandments.

As regards the belief in a life after death or salvation of the soul, it is simply impertinent to maintain that the average European or American is hypocritical while the Indian is sincere. Salvation of the soul is the cardinal principle also of Christianity and the average European or American Christian, by virtue of the fact of being better educated than his Indian prototype, is able to follow his faith more intelligently. With the vast majority of Hindus, religious belief is but a matter of habit, a bundle of superstitions. No unbiassed person can regard that as the token of spiritual superiority. *Moksha* has practically vanished from the religious vision of the average Hindu. *Artha*—the struggle for bare physical existence—cruelly governs his whole being, with *kama*, often in very unæsthetic forms dominating the dark corners. The shackles of antiquated social institutions like caste rules, together with the civil and criminal laws of the British government, have taken the place of *dharma*.

The more reasonable protagonists of spiritualism can be expected to come forward with the rejoinder, "granted that the above picture represents the reality of the present situation, that only proves certain degree of degeneration of our culture; the object of Indian nationalism is to arrest the deplorable process, and regain our spiritual culture as the model for the rest of the world. The present failing to prove the case, the evidence for India's spiritual superiority is discovered

in the past. It is contended that as long as *dharma* did not degenerate and *moksha* shone as the guiding star of life, *artha* and *kama* occupied but a minor place in the life of the Hindu. The contention is utterly unfounded. Historically, it is not true. Even legends recorded in the epics do not corroborate the contention. The epics are replete with the description of royal courts outdoing each other in grandeur, luxury and vain-glory. Thus even before India came under the impact of Western materialism, when *dharma* was pure, and *moksha* did not vanish from the vision of life, *artha* and *kama* were not despised. They were certainly enjoyed, if not worshipped. The quintessence of the *dharma* of India in her golden age is described in the Mahabharat. Read the *Shanti Parva* to find how eager even the Brahmins were to acquire worldly goods.

A critical study of history and unbiassed observation of facts reveal that the great bulk of the Indian people, like any other people, are primarily concerned with the requirements of physical existence. And the culture of a people is to be judged by the standard of its bulk. Pet doctrines preached by the "intellectual elite" do not reflect the ideology of the masses. Even preachers of the doctrines themselves, in daily life, are obliged to come down from the giddy altitude of abstract ideals. Good many of our students, for example, may believe fervently in the spiritual mission of our country; they may be eloquent defenders of the Indian ideal of life; by some queer and questionable logic, they may be convinced that such noble virtues as the spirit of sacrifice, sincerity, purity of mind etc. are the characteristics of Indian life; they may cherish the day-dream of participating

in the mission of India saving the tormented world from the sin of materialism. All this sounds so very beautiful, and it is so self-gratifying to repeat these professions with a ring of conviction. But what after all is the ideal that Indian students are actually pursuing? To get a semblance of education, not for the sake of education, but for its market value; to equip themselves for the prosaic mission of acquiring worldly goods.

There are those who identify materialism with capitalism. If that view is taken, then materialism cannot be denounced as a Western product. Capitalism is an economic system which evolved over a whole period of history. Although for many reasons it happened to flourish more luxuriantly in certain parts of the world, its germs have been sprouting for hundreds of years in all the civilised countries. India had not been free from that process. Indeed, she contracted the disease earlier than the western world. Handicraft industry and trade flourished in India "when the forefathers of modern Europe were going naked." What does that mean? It means that India was well ahead on the road of materialist civilisation before the European peoples left behind their primitive innocence and spiritualist mode of thought associated with that state of social and cultural backwardness. India was walking cheerfully in the corrupting embrace of materialism when Europe was slumbering in the darkness of the highly spiritual middle ages. India developed the sinful love of lucre before Europe appeared on the scene.

Indian spiritualists are not ashamed of this sinful love. They propose to legalise, sanctify it in a happy and harmonious wedlock between capital and labour, thereby

setting an object-lesson to the materialist West. In other words, the proposition is to spiritualise capitalism; and if capitalism be the synonym for materialism, the proposition becomes the height of absurdity, namely to spiritualise materialism. Confusion of thought, devotion to catch-phrases, drives the Indian intelligentsia to this impossible position. We must know what we want, and have the courage to go after the desired. If traditional ideas and ideals check our progress towards political freedom and economic prosperity, we must let the past bury its dead and stand courageously with our face turned towards the future. The radical youth must be the vanguard in this historic struggle for social liberation. Each socio-political revolution is preceded by a philosophical revolution. It is the task of the radical intelligentsia to bring this about. As long as the progressively minded youth remain under the influence of the antiquated religious form of thought, they will not be able to play a distinguished part in our struggle for political freedom and social regeneration. The rotten structure of all human values. Man does not live by bread alone; but a starving man can neither have noble sentiments nor creative ideas. Therefore the task of nationalism is to secure economic betterment of the masses; the rest will follow in due course. Conquest of political power is necessary for the purpose.

(to be concluded)

### A CORRECTION

In the article entitled "Yoga" on page 132 of the last issue of Reason delete the following last but one line in the second column :—

"Vraha Yoga is the way to gaiety through grief"

and add the following :—

"Viraha Yoga is the way to the feeling of love in separation."

G. L. Koppikar

## NOTES AND NEWS

The youths of the Bene-Israel community in Bombay held their Sixth Youth Day on 24th August. It is an annual function and the programme consists of a subject for discussion or debate, in which only those between the ages of 15 and 35 years are allowed to participate, followed by a social and entertainment.

Our President, Dr. P. S. Erulkar, was requested to send a message and the same was published in their *Programme*. We reproduce it here as we think it will be of interest to our readers. It was also published in the *Bombay Sentinel*.

"I would like to congratulate you on the bold and wise decision to exclude the old from your deliberations. Mostly they are incapable of a wide vision, and impotent of action. What they call experience is repetition of their failures. With the exclusion of such adverse influences, you, the youth, I hope will have your ideals and will strive for the achievement of these ideals.

"What should be your ideals, and what should be the means for the realisation of these ideals? These ideals would be the same for all youths—be they Bene-Israelis or Hindoos or Muslims—be they orientals or occidentals. I am sure you will not tolerate these unnatural and immoral distinctions of caste, colour and creed. You can recognise only the caste of culture. You cannot believe in any creed except the creed of reason. You cannot belong to any community except the community of workers.

"May I hope—and this with good reason—that the young Bene-Israelis will look beyond the communal boundaries to the one united nation—the Indian nation; so that one day, that nation of ours may cross the national boundaries to join the united nations of the world?

"This may sound too difficult an ideal to achieve. But remember every ideal is too difficult in the beginning. Each generation must work hard, so that a future generation may realise it.

"One last word before I conclude. There are many problems that face you today. I ask you to examine these problems, with

the aid of reason, in the light of our knowledge and with a determination to find the truth. Man has been called *Homo Sapiens*. You, I hope will live up to that description; even if others continue to remain *Homo Stultus*."

The organisers of the Youth Day who, we learn, have now formed a permanent body, are to be congratulated on the way in which discussions are conducted. There is a welcome tendency towards a tolerant and enlightened approach to all questions including religion. No doubt there will always be people who add more heat than light to a discussion but other things being equal a discussion is always fruitful in so far as it makes people think on the question at issue.

We are indeed very pleased to welcome Mr. C. Deb-Banerji of Calcutta, a regular member of our Association for many years, as a Life Member. We take this opportunity of thanking him for his support to the R. A. I. in the past.

We have received a gentle reminder with many regrets of course from our printers that due to the rise in price of paper, etc., they would be unable to continue publishing the journal at the present rates. But readers need have no fear. Thanks to the generosity and timely help that we are receiving, *Reason* will continue to appear as usual.

We gratefully acknowledge the following:—

C. Deb-Banerji, Calcutta, Rs. 100; S. A. Brelvi, Rs. 5; Lt.-Col. S. S. Sokhey, Rs. 5; P. M. Wagle, Delhi, Rs. 5; Dr. H. P. Moolgaokar, Rs. 5; Miss Kapila Khandwala, Rs. 5; S. Moses, Rs. 5.

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Dr. C. L. D'Avoine, Rs. 10; P. M. Wagle, Delhi, Rs. 15.

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Dr. H. P. Moolgaokar, Rs. 5.

### NOTICE.

**Subscribers to *Reason* should please note that the annual subscription is now Rs. 2-8.**

(Continued from page 136)

Krishna was the friend and ally of the Pandavas, and it was by Krishna's ruses and diplomacy that these five were led to victory. Of course there were numerous royal allies on either side, but they were mere accessories. On the battlefield, when it came to actual fighting, Arjuna, the third brother out of the five, on whom depended the fate of the battle, suddenly showed a disposition to shirk it, not because he was afraid, but because he had scruples about killing his own cousins for the sake of a kingdom. Krishna, who had agreed to be his charioteer, but was under a vow not to bear arms himself, delivered a lecture to him on the battlefield, with both armies quietly waiting till the lecture was finished! It seems that very strict principles were adhered to in the conduct of the war. The war ceased at sunset and there were no surprise attacks, at least at night, so that the armies slept in peace till the morning, when the war started again. It is not mentioned whether they had any intervals for lunch (tea was unknown), but the whole thing would look rather ridiculous in these days, when every attempt is made to cheat the enemy in all possible ways! In the epic, the five brothers are strictly honest, and were, besides, guided by Krishna, who has declared in the Gita that he is himself the Omnipotent God. This god, however, was apparently obliged to resort to all kinds of tricks to help his proteges to win the war. For instance, when the aged Drona, the generalissimo of the Kauravas, being in doubt as to whether the Ashwatthama that was reported to have been killed was his son or an elephant of the same name, and knowing that the eldest Pandava would never lie even to an enemy, asked him for the information, this brother Dharma was persuaded by Krishna himself to reply, "It may be

your son or may be the elephant," on which Drona lost heart and became an easy prey. This Dharma is reputed to have ascended bodily to heaven, but with the loss of a toe on account of this lie.

The Bhagavad-Gita itself consists of the lecture delivered by Krishna to Arjuna, as mentioned above, in order to persuade him to fight, because it was his duty as a Kshatriya, even if his enemies were his own cousins. Krishna tells him that he would only be the instrument, carrying out the designs of God, i.e., of Krishna himself, who had already decided everybody's fate. It is a direct instigation to fight, and still Gandhi can apparently reconcile it with "Ahimsa," nay, base his cult of non-violence on the Gita itself. This may seem to many people a mystery, but what is religion without mystery?

## Human Affairs



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A striking instance of the stupidity of religious people is the fact that some of them believe that Shri Krishna actually recited the verses of the Gita on the battlefield, composing them as he went on. It must be remembered that the whole of the epic is in verse, and consequently any speech that occurs in it is also in verse. It does not occur to these people that if they believe the Gita to have been spoken in verse, it would be equally reasonable to suppose all the characters in the epic to speak in verse too!

Though the ultimate object of the Gita was to persuade Arjuna to fight, it contains a philosophical dissertation on all the systems then in vogue, and hence its importance as a religious book. The fact is that the Hindu religion is not based on any particular book, and Muslims in particular refuse to recognize it as a religion at all on that ground. It is in answer to that objection that the Gita has been put forward as the Book of the Hindu religion. In it Krishna boasts of his extraordinary powers of creation and destruction, and that he has himself created the four castes, etc., and some of the verses directly imply that women are inferior to men, and Vaishyas and Shudras inferior to Brahmanas and Kshatriyas. Such ideas are certainly not acceptable in modern times and they are certainly unworthy of a god. But can mere humans decide what is worthy of a god? Of course modern interpreters like Gandhi try to get some more acceptable sense out of the same lines by a little juggling, but it would be simpler to admit that Krishna merely gave expression to the ideas current in his time, which of course disposes of his claim to godhood.

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—Goethe.

# REASON

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## A JEWISH DIARY

As I sit down to write to-day—30th September—my semitic blood quickens within me. To-day I may sin and sin abundantly with all the force of my reason against religion and superstition, but tomorrow is the 10th of *Tishri*, the Jewish "Day of Atonement" and I must seek forgiveness in words of flattery and pleading from the all merciful and all powerful "Lord of hosts" who nevertheless, I am told on good authority, is a "jealous God" and visits unto the "seventh generation" the sins of our forefathers.

\* \* \* \*

Many a time and oft, and even with regularity, have I transgressed the dictates of religious precept and practice. I have felt the idea of a "chosen race" unjust to the rest of humanity. I have found contradictions in the Bible. I have thought parts of it unfit for children to read; parts of it have outraged my human sense of justice and morality. I have found ideas in it against which every woman should rise in protest as a reflection on one half of humanity. I however bow to Eve for having had the courage to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge and wish that her many and charming descendants would do the same with profit to themselves and peace to others. I have found much of the contents of the Bible incompatible with the idea that it is the inspired word of God or that those who wrote it were inspired.

I have found its ideas of astronomy, geology and medicine incompatible with modern knowledge. I have found greater beauty, nobler thoughts, higher ideals, in the words and deeds of countless ordinary mortals who were devoid of all belief in the supernatural. I have sincerely tried to understand religion but my faith has diminished as my understanding increased. I have sincerely tried to think of God but the more I have thought of him the less I have thought of him.

\* \* \* \*

I have placed the service of man above the service of God, and have raised my humble voice in protest against the exploitation of my fellow-men by those who claim to be his representatives. I have seen no difference between man and man nor any reason why accident of birth should make one superior to the other. I have found the fellowship of warm-hearted men and women whose paramount desire is to establish a set of values based upon justice and humanity, better than the fellowship of spirits and angels. I have found that honest scepticism is better than blind faith, intellectual honesty better than pious hypocrisy, a little bit of happiness in this world better than the illusive promise of a visionary life beyond.

\* \* \* \*

But even if I atone for these and many other sins I have committed, I am afraid I shall lapse and sin again, tempted perhaps by the excellent company in which I do so, and in gratitude to the countless men and women, known and unknown, who have fought, suffered and died in poverty and oblivion, so that mankind may be free, free from ignorance, from the shackles of superstition, from the dead weight of dogma, from the stranglehold of social and religious tyranny, and that men and women may lead their lives with dignity and self-respect. And due to whose courage and sacrifice I to-day enjoy a modicum of freedom of thought, speech and action.

Abraham Solomon.

## RABINDRANATH TAGORE

India mourns the death of her illustrious son, Tagore. It was his unique privilege to become the adored friend and preceptor of millions of his people and of the enlightend in every land. The literary world honoured him with the Nobel Prize, but the countless millions of distressed humanity honoured him with their simple unsophisticated love. He voiced the challenge of humanity to the insolence of might, to the pomp of power and the tyranny of political and economic exploitation. Along with Romain Rolland, Maxim Gorky, and other great literary men of his age, he raised his powerful voice of protest against a civilisation, which is grinding the millions of toilers of the world in poverty and disease, which subordinates social welfare to the profits-motive and which is frustrating and scorching the deep fountains of human sympathy by the introduction of a cash nexus between man and man. He stood for peace and justice among nations and individuals. Through the medium of his inimitable literary art, he sought to regenerate the human instinct of generous love and build a society that will be free from the consuming jealousies and disintegrating antagonisms of contemporary existence.

A mystic he was, but he was not one who denied the reality of life and sought deliverance in renunciation.

"Deliverance is not for me in renunciation. I feel the embrace of freedom in a thousand bonds of delight": so he sang in his *Gitanjali*. The basis of his mysticism was nothing transcendental but was in his deep love of nature and humanity.

He hoped and worked for an India where "reason has not flown into the narrow desert sands of dead habits," where "society has not been broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls" and where men left off all their vain chantings in search of God within the gloomy walls of temples and mosques and sought the thrill of companionship with the toilers of the world.

We pay our humble tributes to this generous personality who loved humanity with all his being and used all the wealth of his genius in the creation of a peaceful, harmonious and integrated society.

# SCIENCE AND MORALS

*By* **R. D. KARVE**

**R**ELIGIOUS people are not known for clarity of thought and this is perhaps one of the reasons why they are religious. A case in point is the exhibition of confused thinking given by Mr. Javdekar, the editor of a Congress paper in Poona, the other day in his presidential address at the Bombay and Suburban Marathi Literary Conference held in Bombay on the 17th of August. This speech was thought so important that the Radio Station in Bombay consented to broadcast a portion of it. Fortunately the broadcast lasted only half an hour and the whole of that speech was not inflicted on radio fans. The speech was supposed to deal with literature, but was more in the nature of a religious sermon. The gist of it was that as ethics is undoubtedly more important than science, scientists must beware of the possible moral, or rather immoral, consequences of their discoveries. In support of this statement, he quoted a scientist and a politician from a book called "The Deeper Causes of War," recently published by the British Institute of Philosophy and consisting of lectures given by various personalities. The so-called scientist is Sir Richard Gregory, F.R.S., editor of "Nature," who says: "The view that the sole function of Science is the discovery and study of natural facts and principles without regard to the social implications of the knowledge gained, can no longer be maintained. It is being widely realised that science cannot be divorced from ethics or rightly absolve itself from the human responsibilities in the application of its discoveries to destructive purposes in war or economic

disturbances in times of peace....." and more to the same effect. I have advisedly called him "so-called scientist," because though this kind of crass stupidity may be expected in religious sermons, it is astounding when it comes from the editor of a respectable scientific journal. This makes one wonder if scientists in England have gone mad on account of the war! How else can one explain this utter repudiation of the scientific attitude? Is it possible that a scientist should not know that it is often quite impossible to say beforehand to what uses or misuses a scientific discovery may be put in times to come? Instances can be given where a scientific discovery has not been put to any practical use for fifty years after it was made. If therefore the above contention is accepted, no scientific discovery can ever be worked on, since nobody can know beforehand how it may be used later on. It will be an absolute bar to all scientific work. The discovery of fire, though nobody knows who made it, will have to be considered a highly immoral discovery, since it is one of the most destructive agencies. Since one has also to consider "economic disturbances in times of peace," no machine must be discovered, since it inevitably means a saving of labour and consequently is bound to cause unemployment, at least for the time being. No wonder this kind of statement gladdens the heart of followers of Gandhi like Mr. Javdekar. As there is in fact no scientific knowledge that cannot possibly be misused, all scientific knowledge will have to be abolished if one carries this kind of thing to its logical conclusion. I wonder

if even Gandhi will relish the kind of primitive life to which mankind will be reduced in that case. Since all knowledge of natural laws is scientific knowledge, men and beasts will be on the same level, and man will then have no protection against wild beasts. If you can use a stick to kill a wild beast, you can also kill a man with the same stick, and so a stick must not be used at all !

The other quotation is from Viscount Samuel, who speaks of economics, politics, ethics and religion in the same vein. It must be admitted, however, that he is on safer ground, since all these can only exist in society and have therefore to consider the good of society. The laws of chemistry will hold whether there is any society or not. But without society, there is no economics, politics or ethics. Obviously then, there is a difference between natural sciences and social sciences. Much may be excused to Viscount Samuel, because a politician is expected to do crooked thinking rather than straight. But even he does his best to spoil his case by confounding ethics and religion. "There is no boundary to separate ethics from philosophy in general and from religion. So also with politics." One wonders which religion he refers to, but very probably he does not know of any other than Christianity. But he must certainly have heard of the Inquisition. Does he really think that it was a moral institution ? Religion has done more harm than science, even when the latter was put to destructive uses. If he knew anything about ethics and philosophy, he would not have damned them by linking them with religion.

In a modern religious sermon, it was inevitable that Mr. Javdekar should quote unscientific scientists like Jeans, Eddington and Lodge, who forget their logic in favour of religion or God or spirits. To non-logical minds like Mr. Javdekar's, it is names that matter, not the cogency of the

arguments advanced, because they are incapable of judging this.

I am obliged to call Mr. Javdekar illogical, because otherwise I will have to charge him with deliberate juggling with words. He starts by asserting the all-importance of "Brahma-Vidya," which he calls "spiritual science." He seems to think that anything can become scientific by being called a science. He proceeds to say, in substance, that since Brahma includes both mind and matter, even materialists can accept the importance of Brahma-Vidya because Brahma includes matter. This is just a concession to materialists, but he maintains on the strength of Jeans, Eddington and Whitehead that the latest tendency of science is towards spiritualism ! He ignores that the overwhelming majority of scientists of distinction is totally against these spiritualist tendencies.

(Please turn to page 164)

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# DEBUNKING ASTROLOGY

Extracts from the article 'SCIENTISTS REPORT ON ASTROLOGY,' published in the American Magazine 'SCIENTIFIC MONTHLY.'

By R. J. GOKHALE

THE astronomically-minded members of the Boston and Cambridge Branch of the American Association of Scientific Workers, aided by some of their colleagues in other parts of the country, have formed a committee to investigate astrology. We present here a brief summary of the report.

A large percentage of the newspapers of the United States publishes either daily or monthly columns on astrology. The appearance of these columns might be expected in newspapers sold to the less-educated portion of the country where superstition is widespread, but a survey shows that it is in the large centres of population that astrological columns are most prevalent. On the average about 20 per cent. of the newspapers in library files carry astrological columns.

Many states have laws prohibiting the practice of astrology. According to *American Jurisprudence* 'Vol. 23, p. 711. "the offence of fortune telling is generally held to be a misdemeanor. Under many statutes fortune tellers are declared to be vagrants and disorderly persons, and it has been said that such persons are without any property rights in a name or appellation, which a court of equity will protect."

Astrology is condemned by the courts and the public can find protection against its practices through existing laws.

"Why is it that physical scientists are, apparently without exception, opposed to the teachings of astrology? Studies of the

stars and planets have shown above all that the amounts of radiation from these bodies that are received on the earth are exceedingly small and that their gravitational effects are so slight as to be negligible in comparison with those from nearby objects.

Apart from the sun, the moon is the only celestial body that will regularly produce a force in excess of the gravitational force produced by the immediate surroundings at the time of birth. Only under the most favourable conditions can the gravitational attraction of the planet Mars equal that produced by the doctor in charge of the delivery!

The apparent brightness of a star or planet will hardly be more than that of the tail-light of an airplane passing in flight overhead. The walls of hospitals and other buildings where babies are born are opaque to all known radiations from the stars and planets.

Is it possible that there exists some as yet unknown way in which the planets can exert their influence on human affairs? It is extremely unlikely that the planets, which have a considerable degree of similarity in their general constitution, would affect human affairs according to the generally accepted scheme of astrology. For astrology as it is practised to-day does not only require an unknown mechanism for the transfer of planetary influence, but it requires further that planets with a considerable degree of similarity would affect human affairs in an entirely dissimilar fashion.

Astrologers attach great influence to the signs of the zodiac. Because of precession of the equinoxes the apparent positions of these signs have shifted by more than twenty-five degrees during the past twenty centuries. It is impossible to understand how the stars can affect human affairs, but it is doubly difficult to suggest a mechanism to account for the influence of the zodiacal signs, which continue to change their positions among the stars.

Scientists would feel justified in considering astrology as a legitimate field of scientific inquiry if the astrologers could claim that its basic rules had been established through a rigorous study of correlations. This is not the case. The rules by which astrologers interpret their horoscopes have not been derived from any known experiments or observations. Astrologers frequently claim the observational basis to be in the experience of forgotten generations far back in antiquity; but pure superstition can claim as sound a basis!

It is possible to test for certain broad influences assigned by astrologers to specific planets and signs of the zodiac. Prof. Farnsworth has studied the zodiacal birth signs of some two thousand musicians and painters. He found that the correlation predicted by astrology—Libra is supposedly the aesthetic sign—was absent. A member of the committee has made some similar tests for birth dates of scientists listed in *American Men of Science*. The investigation shows (1) that the frequency distribution of birth dates of scientists resembles very closely a random distribution; (2) that the seasonal variations of birth dates resemble very closely those found by Huntington.

In conclusion, we find that astrologers have failed to suggest a workable mechanism

by which the stars and planets can exert their influence on human destiny. The doctrine of astrology cannot claim that it is in any way supported by statistical evidence from observed correlations, and until such correlations are established scientists cannot accept the precepts of astrology. Scientists can do a valuable service to society by pointing out publicly that the predictions lack every conceivable scientific foundation.

At the request of Professor G. W. Allport the Executive Council of the Society for Psychological Study of Social Issues authorized the release by the committee of a statement entitled: "Psychologists State Their Views on Astrology."

"Psychologists find no evidence that astrology is of any value whatsoever as an indicator of past, present, or future trends in one's personal life or in one's destiny. Nor is there the slightest ground for believing that social events can be foretold by divinations of the stars.

"Faith in astrology or in any other occult practice is harmful in so far as it encourages an unwholesome flight from the persistent problems of real life.

"By offering the public the horoscope as a substitute for honest and sustained thinking, astrologers have been guilty of playing upon the human tendency to take easy rather than difficult paths. Astrologers have done this in spite of the fact that science has denied their claims."

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Authority—man cannot exist without it, and yet it brings in its train just as much of error as of truth. It perpetuates one by one things which should pass away one by one; it rejects that which should be preserved and allows it to pass away; and it is chiefly to blame for mankind's want of progress.

Goethe

# THE APOLOGISTS OF GOD

*By D. D. KARVE.*

**B**ELIEVERS in the existence of God or in some kind of supernatural force regulating the affairs of this universe, many times use very ingenious arguments in support of their case. Most of them have now abandoned the cruder arguments put forward by their predecessors. The old argument that because the world exists there must be a creator for it, has now been thrust into the background, at least by the more intelligent of God's advocates. For, anybody can see that if one has to insist on a creator (i.e., a cause) for everything, there must be a creator for the creator also, a creator for this second creator, and so on. In other words, the insistence on the existence of one creator involves the theists into accepting an endless series of creators, which is not very much to their liking. It is more honest, and also intellectually more satisfying, to assume that the universe itself has been in existence for infinity and that in our present state of knowledge it is not possible to say how, when and why the universe came into existence.

In order, therefore, to avoid the choice between postulating no god or an infinite series of gods creating each other, the theists have been forced to assume that human intelligence is so limited, that we cannot possibly answer the riddle of the creation of the universe. Having once assumed the impossibility of man's ever finding a proper rational solution of this problem, they go ahead and make certain statements, which are incapable of direct verification. The religious-minded people tell us to believe implicitly in some favourite god of theirs and say that you cannot apply logical tests

either to his existence or to the qualities which they attribute to him. In the midst of all the misery in this world, you are asked to accept an all-merciful, all-powerful, all-seeing god. As an argument in his favour, they suggest that such a belief is very comforting to a large number of people. Even supposing that such a belief is comforting to some people, one can only pity the mind that can be comforted by the present state of the world as being the result of the planning by an all-powerful and merciful god. If there were such a god in reality, one would rather be vexed with him for not arranging matters in a better way, especially when, according to the initial assumption, he had the power to do so. The rationalist way of thinking, which says that a large number of unpleasant things in this world could be eliminated by a better planning by man himself and that the others have got to be taken as inevitable, is, in my opinion, much more satisfying. Saying to oneself that a famine or a plague epidemic or a war is the result of the will of a merciful and all-powerful god, can, by no stretch of imagination, be a consolation to a right-thinking person.

The more sophisticated of God's supporters go off in a different direction altogether. They say that our senses are not the only ways of acquiring knowledge of the external world, but that there are other ways, e.g., intuition and meditation, of acquiring valuable knowledge of the universe. Now, meditation can only show new relationships between observed facts, or can suggest hypotheses capable of being tested by further observation and experiment; but any fundamentally new piece of

knowledge cannot be obtained by meditation alone. All the mystics who proclaim the existence of a spiritual world, apart from the physical world of observation and experiment, are only deluding themselves and their followers. Once you say that a particular piece of information is obtained only by meditation and has to be taken on trust, because it is not capable of verification, you go into the world of phantasy and dreams. A dream or a trance may be a reality as far as a particular person is concerned, but to the outside world it can only be a particular state of the brain of the individual concerned. No logical structure satisfying every right-thinking person or capable of verification by him can be built on the basis of such dreams.

A further argument against such assumptions of extra-sensual ways of acquiring knowledge is, that all those who say they possess such faculties give varying and many times contradictory accounts of what they have seen or experienced. The theosophists, for example, give details of a life in the spiritual world, which are not acceptable to a large number of other mystics. This undoubtedly points to the existence of a vast number of private spiritual worlds, accessible only to certain individuals and which have to be taken on trust by everybody else who is not capable of that particular degree of self-delusion.

If I were to say that any person who could stand on his head for 31 years, 4 months and 17 days continuously, would at once be convinced about the existence of God, about how and when he created the universe and about the way he regulates it, no direct argument could negative the proposition. But a rational person has to weigh the possibility of any such statement being true and to reject it without further argument. As soon as a person refuses to argue a

proposition logically and puts forward propositions, which are incapable of verification, he is to be classed as a non-rational person. He is of course free to delude himself and those that are simple enough to accept his propositions. Details regarding previous births, the affairs of the world of the spirits of dead persons and such other descriptions are all right as far as their entertainment value is concerned. But to discuss them in all seriousness merely indicates a defective intellect. Rationalists cannot waste time in arguing about these details, because there can be no argument when the whole fabric rests on a "sixth sense" by which the information has been collected, and which is the private property of a particular person only. The mental hospitals all over the world are full of such persons, who are convinced about certain propositions. The pity is that many persons who profess to possess these "sixth senses" are outside these institutions.

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# MATERIALISM AND SPIRITUALISM

By **M. N. ROY**

(Continued from page 145)

Indian spiritualists are not ashamed of this sinful love. They propose to legalise, sanctify it in a happy and harmonious wedlock between capital and labour, thereby setting an object-lesson to the materialist West. In other words, the proposition is to spiritualise capitalism; and if capitalism be the synonym for materialism, the proposition becomes the height of absurdity, namely to spiritualise materialism. Confusion of thought, devotion to catch-phrases, drives the Indian intelligentsia to this impossible position. We must know what we want, and have the courage to go after the desired. If traditional ideas and ideals check our progress towards political freedom and economic prosperity, we must let the past bury its dead and stand courageously with our face turned towards the future. The radical youth must be the vanguard in this historic struggle for social liberation. Each socio-political revolution is preceded by a philosophical revolution. It is the task of the radical intelligentsia to bring this about. As long as the progressively minded youth remain under the influence of the antiquated religious form of thought, they will not be able to play a distinguished part in our struggle for political freedom and social regeneration. The rotten structure of an antiquated social system must be pulled down. The misplaced loyalty to the traditions of a decayed culture kills the incentive to progress. The boldness required to bury the dead past can be born only of the spirit of revolt set free by scientific knowledge.

The weakness of Indian nationalism lies in its ideology. An objectively pro-

gressive movement is burdened with the ballast of reactionary ideas and antiquated ideals which run counter to it. The latent forces of the movement are being cramped by its ideology. It needs a revolutionary philosophy. The radical youth should come forward with it. They should not be ashamed of learning from others. Europe went through the revolution still to take place in our country. The experience of the European peoples is a heritage of humanity. We must be benefited by it. For the progress and prosperity of our country we need scientific knowledge and rationalist thought. If we want to go forward in the future, we must have the courage to break away from the past. The longer we linger with the virtues of the past, virtues which have ceased to be virtues, and have become vices, the further shall we remain from the victories of the future. Only that much in past greatness is useful which helps the attainment of a greater future. The rest is shackle to be shaken off by those who want to be free and go ahead.

In order to rescue the positive contribution of Indian culture, we must have a fearlessly critical approach to history. Facts must be distinguished from fictions. The doctrine of spiritual genius is one of the most fascinating fictions which distorts past history and befogs future perspective. This doctrine must be discarded. We should not be ashamed of the fact that Indians are human beings, and, therefore, are as much concerned with the necessities of human existence as any other people. They are not disembodied spirits, nor are

they gods. We must realise the fact that the cult of spiritualism, instead of making us superior beings, has degraded the Indian masses to the abject depths of fatalism. That national vice, glorified as the virtue, the special genius of our race, has been the cause of India's political slavery and social backwardness. Aspiring to be gods, Indians have forfeited human rights. Preoccupied with the concern for the liberation of the soul, they have willingly submitted themselves to social slavery. But man must exist physically before he can be elevated spiritually. To improve the conditions of physical existence, therefore, is essential for the cultural and spiritual progress of any nation. We must turn our attention to that task. Anything that stands in the way to the material well-being of the people, must go, however venerable that may be. Our spiritual tradition stands in the way. It teaches them to be submissive. We must carry to them a message of revolt, revolt against authority, revolt against tradition, revolt against the intolerable conditions of life. That is the task of the radical youth.

Our struggle for freedom must be conducted on the ideological as well as on the socio-political plane. The youth must be inspired with a new philosophy. Those who stand for a radical transformation of the established socio-political relations must break away from the spiritualist view of life which encourages resignation and makes for inaction. As the vanguard of our struggle for freedom, the youth should be inspired with the revolutionary philosophy of materialism. They should not be terrified by the term. Materialism is as old as mankind itself. Human desires, behaviours and actions, sanctimoniously, but nonetheless erroneously condemned as materialism, are biological

functions constituting the very essence of life. If man has any birth-right, that is the right to live, and live like a human being, the great bulk of our nation has been deprived of this birth-right. The motive-force of our struggle for political freedom is the natural urge for asserting the birth-right of man, the right to live under such physical conditions as are conducive to what is called human progress. We want to be free politically, because in the absence of political freedom we are unable to create material conditions, necessary for the spiritual liberation and cultural progress of the Indian people. Political freedom is not our end. It is the means to the end of economic prosperity and cultural progress. Economic well-being is the condition for the creation of all human values. Man does not live by bread alone; but a starving man can neither have noble sentiments nor creative ideas. Therefore the task of nationalism is to secure economic betterment of the masses; the rest will follow in due course. Conquest of political power is necessary for the purpose.

While inspiring our struggle for freedom with a revolutionary philosophy, the radical youth should actively participate in that struggle. The country does not need arm-chair revolutionaries. The function of philosophy is not only to explain the problems of nature and life, but to remake the world so that it becomes the abode of a higher type of human being. Correct understanding of a revolutionary philosophy makes for greater activity. The revolutionary philosophy, radicalism or materialism, is not contemplative. It is activist. The radicals should not stand aloof from the political movement on the pretext that it is dominated by reactionary ideas and antiquated ideals. Political

passivity is not the method of propagating a revolutionary ideology. It is true that the heritage of our religious tradition has greatly contributed to our present social stagnation, and has brought about our political subordination. But the way out of the social stagnation and economic backwardness will not be open until we are politically free. A revolutionary philosophy is necessary to inspire our struggle for freedom ; but political freedom and the establishment of a revolutionary democratic state are the conditions for the spiritual liberation of the masses, and cultural advance of the nation as a whole. The place of the radical youth is at the forefront of the struggle for the political freedom of our nation. It is under their influence that nationalism will break away from its present orthodox ideology and be inspired by a revolutionary philosophy which will make it politically irresistible and socially dynamic.

But radicals should not try to run away with fascinating ideas. Their activity should be guided not by the zeal to do what must be done, but by the understanding of what can be done under the given circumstances. Man makes history, but he can work only with the material available ; he must not try to make a revolution to order. There is such a tendency among the youthful enthusiasts who call themselves radicals. Radicalism is not necessarily identical with Socialism or Communism. The radical socio-political change historically necessary today in our country will not mean establishment of Socialism. It will be brought about by the democratic revolution, the kind of socio-political change that took place in Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. That was a radical change. It destroyed feudalism, liberated the majority of people from serfdom, undermined the influence of religion, democratised

social relations, created material conditions conducive to the development and dissemination of rationalist thought and scientific knowledge. These revolutionary measures are still to be introduced in our country. To do that is the objective, the historical significance of the nationalist movement. It may not be as yet quite conscious of its historic significance. But it will grow stronger, come nearer to its goal of political freedom, in proportions as it will become conscious of its objective historical revolutionary significance. To arouse that consciousness is the task of the radical youth. But they will not be able to perform their task only by propaganda, less by arm-chair criticism. They must be in the thick of the struggle. They must help the nationalist masses to learn from experience. They must take them through that most enlightening school of life ; help them to realise in course of their own experience that there can be no revolutionary action without a revolutionary theory. That is the line of their action for the present. Working along that line, with courage and conviction, they will, before long, bring about the radicalisation of the forces of national revolution, and the consequent democratisation of its leadership. Then conditions will have been created for taking up the decisive struggle for the capture of power and the establishment of a genuine democratic state. This will ultimately serve as the instrument for the bringing about of the overdue revolutionary social changes necessary for the progress and prosperity of the Indian people.

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## NOTES AND NEWS

Dr. Prem Nath has been appointed Official Representative of the Rationalist Association of India for Northern India. His address is just, Panipat. We request our members and sympathisers to get in touch with him. He has already formed a group which will have lectures, discussions and other activities. Dr. Prem Nath will also be arranging lectures etc., at Delhi and other places and we hope he will get a good response from progressive minded persons in that part of India.

\* \* \*

There are hundreds of convinced rationalists who are unaware of the existence of the R. A. I. We hope our readers will help in establishing contact with such rationalists.

\* \* \*

We would like to have a representative in Calcutta where we are sure Rationalist activities will meet with a good response. We recently advertised in the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* of Calcutta and are receiving many enquiries.

\* \* \*

The R. A. I. has many prominent members in Poona and a local group can very easily be formed there. Poona has been the home of many liberal thinkers and also being an educational centre it is indeed necessary that the R. A. I. should organise activities there.

\* \* \*

The membership of the R. A. I. represents a very, very small proportion of rationalists in this country. We are pleased to note that *Reason* is read with interest by many who are not members. The standard of its contents has been favourably com-

mented on both in India and abroad, considering the difficulties under which it is published and the fact that none of its Contributions are paid for, we may justifiably be proud of the standard maintained, which however falls far short of what is possible provided we had more time at our disposal.

This year the demand for rationalist literature has also increased and would have been much more had it not been for the rise in price of books and the difficulty in getting them.

\* \* \*

All this and many other things point to the necessity of expanding and permanently establishing the R. A. I. on a secure foundation, as our readers know, all the work of the R. A. I. is done honorary and in spare time by persons who have also to attend to their means of livelihood. Thus the R. A. I. is unable to do much that ought to be done and which would without doubt more than treble its membership. Few members mean poor finances, which mean few activities which again mean few members. This vicious circle ought to and must be broken particularly when we are confident that the R. A. I. can definitely become a powerful organisation for the cause of intellectual liberty, social justice, and cultural progress.

\* \* \*

The problem for Rationalism in India is no longer that of there being few rationalists, but that of effectively organising the growing number of men and women who are realizing the bankruptcy of the religious mode of thought and only need guidance for them to accept the positive philosophy of Rationalism which is based on the firm foundation of scientific knowledge.

\* \* \*

There is a suggestion from a few friends that the R. A. I. should turn itself into a Private Limited concern with a small press of its own on the lines of the Rationalist Press Association of London. We think such a venture would be timely and would be successful in spite of the present difficult times. It would immediately solve many difficulties of the R. A. I. However, this suggestion will require careful consideration and we shall welcome concrete suggestions from our readers.

\* \* \* \* \*

Co-secretary Mr. A. Husein has had to leave Bombay for Singapore where he has been taken up by a business concern. The R. A. I. has thus been deprived of the services of a very energetic and sincere worker whom it is difficult to replace. But his leaving Bombay, he assures us, will in no way diminish his interest in the "best of causes." We have a number of members in Singapore with whom we are sure Mr. Husein will soon establish contact. We wish him success in all his endeavours.

\* \* \* \* \*

We have exhausted our stock of copies of *The Crux of the Indian Problem* by Dr. R. P. Paranjpye which is sent free to new members. They will receive the same as soon as copies are available which will be in a few weeks.

\* \* \* \* \*

We gratefully acknowledge the following :—

Shaik Ahmed, Rs. 5 ; Dr. Kamalakar Manohar, Rs. 5 ; Capt. N. D. P. Karani, I.M.S., Rs. 5 ; P. N. Agate, Rs. 20 ; Dr. A. Mendonza, Rs. 5 ; Prof. S. K. Muranjan, Rs. 5.

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Prof. S. K. Muranjan, Rs. 15 ; V. S. Mudvedhar, Rs. 5.

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Ramdas Khimji, Rs. 5 ; R. V. Pitale, Rs. 2-8.

## BOOKS.

Due to the request of several readers recent and forthcoming rationalist publications will be announced in this column from time to time. Readers should book their orders in advance. Books will be sent by V.P.P., unless otherwise desired, as soon as they are available.

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## REVIEWS

**European Evolution**, How to win the Peace, by Mary Saran. Preface by Francis Williams. International Publishing Co., London. Pp. 36. Sixpence.

The author points out the two kinds of errors committed by different people as regards the attitude of Germans towards the Nazi regime: those who think that almost all Germans are opposed to it, and those who think that almost all are supporting it, the truth being midway between the two. The majority of German workers, large sections of the lower middle class who have been disillusioned, and some of the intelligentsia who hate superstition and racial discrimination are certainly opposed to Hitler. But that leaves large sections who certainly favour the Nazi regime and others who are not at all sure what will happen if Hitler disappears. She therefore suggests that propaganda meant for Germans has to be very careful. She then advocates what she calls a "realistic Socialist Policy."

R. D. Karve.

**No Friend of Democracy**, by Edith Moore, with a Preface by Joseph McCabe. International Publishing Co., 12 Great Castle St., London, W. 1. Pp. 51, One Shilling.

This book explains the attitude of the Roman Catholic Church to this war and wars in general. It is certainly a powerful indictment, but as Mr. McCabe says in his preface, "It is not a rhetorical outburst. . . It is a cold statement of facts, mainly on Catholic authority." The Catholic Church aims at world domination and is always on the side which would help her to this end. As the author says, "Those who dub the Pope either pro-Fascist or anti-Fascist in policy have still to learn the most elementary truths about Catholic diplomacy. In the end the author warns readers against the dangers of "Christian Unity". "There is no reasonable basis for the unity of all Christians during this war. Those people inside the Anglican and Free Churches whose desire to see the people free is deep and genuine, should repudiate the alliance which has been initiated by their leaders. Let them get together with lovers of freedom outside the Churches. . . ."

R. D. Karve.

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# "SURAJ" IN A YEAR

*By* MARKSMAN

ONE of the major causes of the present political deadlock in the land—as in the world at large—and of the prospect of its not ending ever or in the near future, appears to me to lie in the wrong aim or objective of the struggle incompatible with the spirit of the times. The parties are apparently and avowedly fighting for "Swaraj" or self-government—not for good government. Self-government literally means governance by one's own people. Nor does it appear to convey any other sense in the turmoiled state of politics of the day. As a corollary, it implies continuation of the existing system, with all its defects—and also merits—only conducted by different hands, viz., the sons of the soil. It would resemble the flogging of a schoolboy by his father instead of by the teacher, or his starvation by the mother instead of by the father. I do not think this change in the executor or administrator of the flogging or starvation, in any way affects the physical effect on the back or stomach of the poor boy.

Of course, self-government might turn out to be slightly better than the distant, indifferent, self-seeking, alien government. But the question is, will the change be worth the terrible cost that will have to be paid—and is partly being paid—for bringing about the paltry change? I do not think.

The phrase "Self-government" may be a proud or brave slogan—and might perhaps have been a pardonable or praiseworthy one in the Middle or Dark Ages. But it is out of tune today. A very part of the phrase, viz., "self" has a repulsive ring about it, in this age of high thoughts—

though unfortunately accompanied by low deeds—an age aspiring to abolish wars and establish brotherhood of man. Anyway, it involves an ethically bad sense, and has actually degenerated into a "selfishness" of the lowest kind. It has given birth to a number of organizations, of diverse interests, hazy notions, and vehement passions—communal, regional, vocational, sentimental—each rivalling with the other in wickedness and wretchedness rather than in goodness or nobleness—in acts culminating in murders, arsons, abuses and insults—atrocities and barbarities, in short, of the worst type. Thus the Congress—or Gandhi—wants Takli raj; the rich want factory raj; the poor want labour raj; the Muslims want Moglai raj; the Hindus want Peshwai raj; the Liberals want Dominion raj; the Leftists want communist raj! The result is that—whoever the instigator, or whatever the manipulation—each is helping towards the prolongation of the British raj, and is having fantastic sectional swaraj or a mutually strangling raj.

One wonders whether the goal of swaraj has not been copied from the theme of a debating club of schoolboys, on account of its mere aural attractiveness. Little trouble appears to have been taken to assess the difficulty of its attainment or the beneficence it is expected to bring about, in this uncommon land of ours—a miniature world—a land of a vast variety of classes and races of people. The bitter experience of over half a century, which is only getting aggravated day by day, does not appear to have provided sufficient data for pondering over this aspect of the problem.

If, however, our leaders would only desist from practising the wretched tactics of the day—of talking much and saying little, of saying one and meaning another, of doing one and showing a third; if they stop showing and spending their wisdom in acts of intrigue, equivocation, verbosity and sophistry called "politics"; if they stop shouting slogans like "Islam in danger", "Truth and Non-violence", "Suddhi and Sanghatan"—or the more enchanting ones as "freedom of speech", "liberty of action", "self-determination"; if they just give up a little of their lower egoism and take their stand on the higher plane of larger humanism; if they cease quarrelling about the foolish and formal "who" and concentrate their efforts on the essential question of "what" and "how"; if, in short, they try to chalk out a scheme not of "Swaraj" but of "Suraj" or good government; i.e., a scheme of:—

1. Mass production and adjustment of population with production.
2. Maintenance of a minimum standard of life, like that of a common soldier of the present day, for a maximum amount of labour, of about 40 hours a week.
3. Establishment of asylums for the treatment and maintenance of the invalid and the disabled.
4. Enactment of stringent laws for the suppression of all kinds of crimes and criminalities.
5. One rule for all in matters material or civil, without distinction of caste, creed, birth or sex.
6. Preference to civil rights over religious or superstitious.
7. Questions like religion and marriage to be the private concern of individuals, like eating, smoking, shaving.

8. And full scope or freedom to bring about any improvement or revolution by peaceful methods of logic and reason.

I do not think a year of 12 months of 30 days each would be too short a period for drafting a detailed working constitution along the above lines, which, solving our problem to the satisfaction of us all—except, of course, a few inherently or irretrievably bad or wicked persons, who can either be safely ignored or can easily be dealt with—should as well provide a model for the rest of the world to copy and be happy.

[It may not be difficult to draw up a scheme, but a foreign government is hardly likely to undertake to put it into practice—Editor.]

(Continued from page 152)

Mr. Javdekar has the cheek to quote a Sanscrit sentence to the effect that there is nothing more sacred than knowledge, and then he interprets this to mean that only that knowledge is sacred which does good to society. It is by this kind of twisting that Sanscrit texts can be made to mean anything that you happen to be intent on proving. But even this twisting cannot get rid of the fundamental fact that knowledge cannot be thus classified into useful knowledge and harmful knowledge. Dynamite has its utility, though it may also be used destructively. That anybody who cannot grasp this simple fact should dare to advise people as to what kind of knowledge they should seek, is in itself sufficient to make the whole speech perfectly ridiculous. No wonder that by the time it came to an end, the hall was nearly empty! No doubt the audience was supposed to be literary rather than scientific, but it is hardly possible in the twentieth century that even a literary audience will stand this kind of thing for more than an hour.



To know that you do not know  
is the beginning of wisdom.

—Confucius.

# REASON

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Abraham Solomon.

The writers of the articles in this journal are themselves responsible for the views expressed and do not implicate the Rationalist Association of India in any way.

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All contributions, correspondence, press cuttings, journals in exchange, enquiries regarding advertisement rates, etc., should be addressed to Mr. Abraham Solomon, Asstt. Editor, "REASON," 59, Karmanl Building, Arthur Road, Bombay, 11.

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## DEW DROPS

Since Germany attacked Russia Christianity and its advocates in England are in a most awkward position. The National Days of Prayer which were being held with increasing frequency have become less frequent. We are sure this is a great relief to God as these mass attacks of prayers from his followers also implied an insult to his omniscience in telling him what he is supposed to do. But now, to pray or not to pray is the question; whether 'tis safer under the circumstances to suffer the bombs and shells of Catholic Hitler or to pray for the victory of Atheistic Russia? So the Archbishop of Canterbury merely wishes "every success to the valiant Russian armies" but no prayers; mind you. That would be asking God to help Atheistic Russia. All this time, according to the Archbishop, England was fighting for the preservation of Christianity, and yet in spite of God's help, for which due thanks were officially voiced, it could not put up the resistance that the Russians are putting up without God's help.

\* \* \* \*

Let those who wish to see the miracle of resurrection go to Russia. The churches which were, we were told, razed to the ground some twenty years ago, have suddenly sprung up again, and so also the

priests who were supposed to have been shot. The number of priests said to have been shot was greater than the actual number of priests at that time. And "It is significant," says the Archbishop, "that on the outbreak of the war thousands flocked to the churches for prayer."

\* \* \* \*

No intelligent person believes that the Russian people became atheists overnight, neither are they all atheists now. All that the new Government did was to separate the Church from the State and put religion on the same footing as any other voluntary social institution. It saw that religion was not made a cover for anti-Soviet activities. The weakness of religion in Russia is not due to any religious persecution. Persecution rarely weakens a movement. It is due to the tremendous advance in education and the spread of scientific knowledge. A nation of 160 millions with 85 per cent. of its people unable to read or write has within a short time been turned into a population that is more than 90% literate. In 1913 there were only 70 books per 100 of the population, in 1939 there were 240. The works of the best writers of the West are published and sold in millions of copies. The three hundred and twenty-fifth anniversary of Shakespeare's death was observed throughout Russia while it passed unnoticed in the country of his birth.

\* \* \* \*

The following appears in *Zealandia*, a New Zealand Catholic paper :—

"To aid Soviet Russia even against our common foe is to invite the curse of God upon ourselves.

"To those who say that Germany's victory over Russia would mean our defeat, we would reply that it is better to go down in honour because of our allegiance to

God than to stand victorious in the world after selling ourselves to the devil."

\* \* \* \*

Although in England the Catholics seem to have become cautious they continue their intrigues unabated in other parts of the world. Catholic Ireland, for example, is giving invaluable help to Hitler by refusing to permit England to use its western shores for naval and air bases. In America, Lindbergh, Father Coughlin, Henry Ford and others are open in their support and sympathies to Nazi Germany.

\* \* \* \*

The power and influence that religious bigotry and vested interests wield in England are apparent from the fact that Mr. Churchill found it necessary to assure the public that he was still against communism. Why this assurance? When a pact was made with France, the then Prime Minister did not announce that he was not a Republican. When a pact was made with Turkey the then Prime Minister did not assure the public that he was not a believer in Moham-medanism. Alliances and pacts and agreements are made for specific purposes, and the whole matter ends with the statement of what these purposes are.

Abraham Solomon.

A man has no claim to free speech unless his object is to utter true speech and to maintain veracity among the people by example.

—George Jacob Holyoake.

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# INDIA'S SPIRITUAL CULTURE

*By* **R. D. KARVE**

**W**HILE no modern scientist worth the name is prepared to admit the existence of the soul, and grave doubts are being raised as to the existence of the mind, which had taken the place of the soul in the eyes of some people (see "The Myth of the Mind" by Frank Kenyon in the Thinker's Library), we find Sir Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan boosting India's spiritual culture in his speech at the opening ceremony of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan at Andheri. The name Andheri is connected with "darkness" and the place was perhaps all the more suitable for the misty vapourings for which the eminent Vice-Chancellor of the Benares University is so well known. His speeches are always extremely elevating. They are couched in excellent English, but when one tries to make out what they mean, one finds this rather difficult unless one is prepared to accept them as too sublime to have any real meaning.

When it is plain to anybody who has eyes to see that India has sunk to the lowest depths of degradation precisely on account of this so-called spiritual culture, which pretends that material welfare is immaterial and that spiritual welfare should be the sole aim of earthly existence, it seems a pity that educational institutions should invite people like Sir S. Radhakrishnan who are bound to insist on the desirability of this same spiritual culture.

The eminent philosopher claims that this culture has lasted for forty or fifty centuries and thinks fit to quote meaningless sentences like "In the beginning was the word

and the word was made flesh." It is things like these which make his speeches sublime. If words could be made flesh, there would never be any lack of food !

He says that Indian culture is "sanatana" (eternal), because it has resisted challenges from Greeks, Mongols and Europeans. Has any part of Indian culture really lasted unchanged during all these centuries? Hardly anything, if one considers the matter dispassionately. During Vedic times, Indians prayed to the powers of Nature, the Sun, the Rain, the Winds, and so on, to give them good crops and make them prosperous in every way. The Hindus of that time ate meat of all kinds, not excluding beef, which is looked on with horror by the Hindus of to-day. Whence came this change? It was a compromise with Buddhism and Jainism which threatened to swamp Hinduism out of existence. To meet the challenge, even the old gods were practically abandoned and temples were erected to new gods like Rama, Krishna, etc. Aryans in Vedic times had a white complexion, but later on they mixed freely with darker tribes and even adopted their gods. The word Krishna means "black" and this god must have been adopted from some dark race. Is this evidence of Indian culture being eternal? In modern times, a number of Indians adopt European dress, though the orthodox consider it unpatriotic to do so. This has really nothing to do with patriotism, since the great Shivaji, the Maratha hero who founded an empire after a long struggle with the Moghul rulers, had adopted the

Moghul style of dress. The impact of foreign civilisations will always have effects of this kind and nothing is eternal. Change is the law of the world and it is no use pretending that Indian culture alone is eternal. This kind of patriotism lays itself open to ridicule.

Sir S. Radhakrishnan believes that the present war is due to "the defeat of the human by the material." He thinks that man has a spiritual side to his nature, "which cannot be satisfied by all that this world can give.....Occasionally perhaps each of us might have had those moods of impersonal joy and sublime happiness where we do not walk on solid air but on thin air, where our minds are filled with infinite joy, where time, space and life are as still as death, where we touch the very limits of latitude and are overwhelmed by the presence of a spiritual reality whose shadow is death and immortality." Whatever this verbiage may mean, I for one have not even had the pleasure of walking on solid air, much less on thin air, and am incapable of the kind of hallucinations in which the speaker seems to indulge. This is the kind of sublimity which the modern scientific mind is apt to consider incomprehensible nonsense.

While he recognizes (fortunately) that education has to train the individual to be a good citizen, he insists that "the most important aim of education is to help us to see the other world to which we belong, the world invisible and intangible, a world beyond space and time. Our citizenship is in heaven." I am here reminded of the priest who was asked by his doctor to take rest for some time and who thought it impossible, but who immediately agreed when the doctor pointed out that the only alternative was Heaven. He was not at all anxious to go to Heaven!

"True Swarajya", says the learned lecturer, "is the freedom of the human spirit.....Each individual must have the liberty to dream, adore and meditate." It may easily be argued that since the British Government gives perfect liberty to the individual to dream, adore and meditate, and since, according to this philosopher, thought is more important than action, as he has emphasized in the same speech, we are already enjoying Swarajya under the British. Why then bother about political freedom at all? It is this dreaming and adoring and meditating that have brought India to its present degradation. In fact, no tyrant in the world, not even Hitler, can take away your liberty of thought, adoration and meditation. Is that any consolation?

This escapist philosophy has been preached in India by Hindu saints for so many centuries because they were helpless, and they were able to do this because of the ancient belief in the supreme importance of the soul as opposed to the body, the spiritual as opposed to the material: an illusion still maintained and preached by people like Sir S. Radhakrishnan, and which does infinite harm to the multitude by stressing the importance of the non-existent to the neglect of the everyday affairs of life, which are all that really matter. It is poor consolation to a starving man to be told that his suffering in this world is busily acquiring for him a place in Heaven, but that is all that these religious preachers can promise him. And that is why religion has been rightly termed the opium of the people: a drug which cures nothing, but helps to forget suffering. People must become conscious of their misery before they will make any serious attempt to remove it, and religion prevents such consciousness.

# EDUCATIONAL IDEALS

By **CRITIQUE**

**F**ROM the Triveni at Allahabad went a Pundit to the mount of Shrinagar, and there to the educationists of India he gave his sermon on the mount. He said :—

"In the world of to-day, everywhere we notice the greed of power. Power is good, but not for itself ; it must be employed for worthwhile aims ; it must be in the hands of the best and wisest, whose life and acts must be one continuous hymn to Providence : it must be exerted to obtain not human rights but rather the divine rights of man. Education should equip men so that their body, mind and spirit should work in harmony for the glory and advancement of man as a creature of God.

"Modern education is godless ; it is entirely secular : it ignores the inner man. In greater or less measure it builds the body, it trains the intellect, it enables one to win one's daily bread, but it keeps society, science, and religion in water-tight compartments, leaving the last to take care of itself. It takes no account of the inner law of the heart."

The Pundit urged compulsory attendance at the religious class, where reverence for all faiths should be instilled.

Pundit Amarnath Jha, Vice-Chancellor of Allahabad University, is an educationist of repute and his opinions deserve careful consideration. In his speech he has given expression to opinions, some of which will meet with the full approval of all rationalists.

He rightly observed that denominational schools and colleges destroy the unity of a people and should therefore be forbidden. But the solution he offers is not a march forward to a scientific outlook and rational ethics ; he demands a compulsory reverence for all religions. He is incapable of escaping the mystic meshes of religion altogether. In his ideal scheme of things, a scientific and rational criticism of all religions will be strictly forbidden. We, rationalists, stand for freedom of all opinions, whether religious or anti-religious, so long as they are soberly phrased. We believe that the antidote to religious quarrels is not an amorphous amalgam of all religions, but a scientific outlook and rational ethics. The essence of any religion is its dogmatism and a blind faith in the infallibility of its theology. Around this dogmatism and theology are gathered various strata of vested interests. A reverence of all religions cannot but involve an acceptance of mutually exclusive and hostile dogmas and theologies—an impossible proposition to a rational mind. Reverence is not the same as tolerance. Tolerance does not preclude reasoned criticism, nor does it mean a compulsory reverence for any particular dogma. A tolerant State must be a secular State. A theocratic State cannot but be intolerant of other religions and nationalism. It is criticism of religion and not a passive reverence for all religions that is wanted. Such a criticism is the beginning of wisdom, as a great philosopher once put it. If educationists like Mr. Jha will permit criticism of religion—and what they are hoping for is that such a criticism would lead to a

recognition that all religions are identical in their essentials, then there is no reason why any *a priori* predilection like a belief in God should restrain the scope of such research. Fearless, scientific criticism of religion as a product of history is what is wanted. There is no other way to social peace and intellectual clarity.

What is wrong with modern education is not that it is godless. It is only after many struggles that education and the State were separated from the Church in the West. The achievements of the epoch since the flaming banner of the French Revolution was unfurled would be rendered nought if theocracy with its dogmas were to be re-enthroned in the citadels of education and State. Theocracy has won the first rounds in this renewed conflict. In Spain and France, Catholicism is back again in the saddle, with what results on the people is well known. In Germany and other countries under the tyranny of Nazism, a new theocracy is brought into being and established as the unchallenged ideology of all peoples. Nazism is a new religion. It is wrong to think that it is rationalistic in its contents because it seeks to replace the erstwhile religions of Europe. In conformity with the general trend towards monopoly and totalitarianism, which is the characteristic of Nazism and Fascism, we see the tyranny of monopolies not only in the field of economics and State organisation, but also in the ideological sphere. Nazism is a new religion, which claims to have been revealed to the Führer and is based on a general regimentation of all peoples and subordination of them to leaders appointed from above and on the unscientific principle of racial superiority of the Nordics. The effect of this Nazi theocracy on the peace and civilisation of the world is daily unfolding itself before us.

What is wrong with present education is that it is controlled by the scale of values that prevail within contemporary society which is based on aggressive acquisitiveness and monopolistic exploitation. The economic forces that control the State and society control education as well. To them education is only a means of producing technically efficient automatons who will man their machines and bring them profits. To them education is only a means of polluting the minds of these exploited of humanity with false ideas of "race," "white man's burden," "special national missions," and such like, for the purpose of waging wars for markets, colonies and fields of investment. Yet those great and beautiful emotions of kinship and fellow-feeling live and throb in the hearts of the multitudes who toil ceaselessly for inadequate returns. It is only when these exploited "inherit the world," when Imperialism and Fascism have been shattered, and when the resources of the world are owned and controlled by humanity for their collective welfare, it is only then in such a society that all educational institutions without exception will have a proper scale of values. Until then, those who see the historical process and side with the progressive forces, can see that the educational institutions under their control become centres where the young can be trained and enthused to play their part in the struggle for peace and progress. The Dean of Canterbury, a stout-hearted rebel against the hypocrisy of organised Christianity, nevertheless a Christian, went to the U. S. S. R. and there he found that the ethical values for which he strove were the cornerstones of the new civilisation growing up on the ungodly Soviet soil. Rational ethics which seeks the welfare of man needs not the sanction of

divine command. What is wrong with present education is that it is the means to the defence of an inequitable *status quo* and all organised religions are to-day the supporters of the essential principles of this *status quo*, though each one of them may favour the dominance of one particular national economic group over the rest.

Mr. Jha, like many others, has an individualist conception of society and consequently of power. The social process, no doubt, works through individuals, not as isolated beings but as collective groups. The interest of a group or a class seeks for mastery, and the individuals who wield power support or oppose such a struggle according to their group and class affiliations. Those who want to solve the question of power should realize that a struggle for power between two mutually irreconcilable forces is taking place on an epic scale from Murmansk to the Caucasus and on the oceans of the world. It is for each person to decide which side he will support, which set of ideals and practical achievements do meet with his approval, and it is only after that that the question arises which individual is best fitted to hold a particular position of responsibility on that side. Hitler, Churchill, Stalin, Mussolini, Gandhi and Roosevelt are all persons who are absolutely honest as to what they want. Each one of them represents fortitude and sagacity, and all except one of them claim to be devout followers of God. Their ideas of God and goodness are as divergent as their economic and political ideals. It is possible to choose one of them only as the symbol of an economic, political and social ideal. Each is representative of a system and not just an individual, and what the world is called upon to do is to choose one of these systems. It is the struggle, not among these individuals but among

these systems that we are witnessing to-day, and our primary choice is of the system and not of the individuals, and it is of the class whose struggles have originated and advanced the systems we have chosen.

Once we have decided the side on which we should be, in the social conflicts going on around us, we have to decide which individual is best suited at a given moment to lead any of the activities of our side. Scientific objectivity, absolute loyalty and indomitable courage are the qualities which leaders should have, and not the mysticism which would wait upon an inscrutable "inner voice." It is not necessary to fall on the sanction of a mysterious "inner voice" when rational arguments can demonstrate the validity of any conclusions which the leaders want the public to accept, and when, therefore, such arguments are absent and the sanction of such mysterious voices is invoked, the movement degenerates into a senseless tyranny of a few obscurantist leaders. We have in India too many leaders whose "life and acts are a continuous hymn" to their respective "Providences," each one of them claiming a direct access to the mind of his own particular God; but their doings make a sad spectacle of rank communalism, pathetic Utopianism or a precarious sitting on the fence while life rushes by. Not the many "Providences" mutually warring against each other, but scientific objectivity and historical realism are what we want.

Power should be used "to obtain not human rights but rather the divine rights of man," says Mr. Jha. Let us not leave the concrete and understandable "human rights" and chase the phantom of "divine rights." Those who aspire for divinity and the imaginary life beyond may strive for their divine rights, but while on this

earth, the believers and unbelievers are collectively interested in our human rights and duties. It is difficult to conceive of any divine rights on earth. Freedom from want is a human right, and so is the freedom of speech, press and association. Equal opportunities for education is as much a human right as the right to work and living wages. What are these divine rights which are supposed to be distinct from and incompatible with human rights? When rationalists speak of human rights they speak of rights necessary for the full development of all the attributes of man, including both the so-called "spiritual" and "material" qualities. To us the concept of a disembodied spirit is not acceptable, but we more than the spiritualists recognise the human capacity to think and feel. It is because we are anxious that the right to think should not be smothered in any way that we advocate that education should be free from all unverifiable *a priori* assertions. It is because we feel that the fountains of sympathy, fellow-feeling and generous love of man and nature should not be dried under the scorching heat of acquisitiveness and exploitation, that we stand for a different social structure. To us the exhortation to concentrate on some undefined divine rights as distinct from and superior to human rights seems to be but a continuance of the traditional attempt of all religions to divert the attention of the exploited and down-trodden from the immediate task of bringing about a social transformation. We have amidst us examples of such dangerous pursuits of divine rights. The Muslim League is more concerned with the divine rights of Islam than with the poverty of Muslim masses or the ultimate necessity of all peoples to live together under one world federation. Gandhiji is more concerned

with the pursuit of an abstract "non-violence" and "ahimsa," than with the freedom of the people, or the necessity of an absolute transformation in the economic basis of society. He would rather not have the freedom of his people than return the blow of a tyrannical system which grinds or threatens to grind the people. He would rather have the monopolists strangle whole nations for their profits than forcibly dispossess them. All this because he is more concerned with the divine than with human rights, and that is the essence of all forms of Utopianism. Unless our education and our social outlook escape from the drugging effect of this reactionary romanticism, of this other-worldly abstraction, unless we obtain a scientific and historic view of man and society we have no chance of attaining our freedom or contributing anything worth while to human progress.

Mr. Jha pleads for planning in education. "In order that education may not lead one to a blind alley or an over-congested field, it is necessary that it should be planned so as to be adjustable to the needs of society and suited to the natural talent of the individual." This is admirable. But one may ask how far this planning is possible in a planless chaotic society. It is only when you have production for social welfare and not for profits, only when monopolies are replaced by co-operative ownership and endeavour, would planning be possible. Unemployment is otherwise a permanent feature of our contemporary society whose only solution for the problem is war. No planning of vocational education would be complete without social planning, and no social planning compatible with social welfare is possible without social transformation.

(to be concluded)

The essential thing in education is not the doctrine taught, but the arousing of the faculties.—Ernest Renan.



## RELIGION AND THE U. S. S. R.

*The following document, we think, will be of interest to our readers.—Ed.*

### DECREES AND STIPULATIONS OF THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT RELATING TO RELIGION AND THE CHURCH.

A.—Decree of January 23, 1918, "On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Societies."

1. The Church is separated from the State.

2. Within the limits of the Republic it is prohibited to publish any kind of local laws or orders which would hinder or limit the freedom of conscience, or would establish any kind of preference or privilege on the basis of the denominational adherence of the citizens.

3. Every citizen may adhere to any religion or adhere to none. Any limitations before the law relating to adherence to any kind of faith or non-adherence to any faith is abolished.

Note:—From all official documents are excluded every reference to religious adherence or non-adherence of citizens.

4. All State and other public and social functions before the law are not to be accompanied by any religious customs or ceremonies.

5. Free practice of religious customs is safeguarded in so far as it does not disturb the public peace and does not infringe upon the rights of citizens of the Soviet Republic. Local authorities have the right to take all necessary measures to safeguard public peace and security in all cases.

6. No one may evade his civil duties on religious grounds. Exemptions from these, on condition of substituting one form of civil service by another, in each separate

case must be granted by a decision of a people's court.

7. The religious oath is abolished. In necessary cases only solemn promises are given.

8. Records of civic states are kept exclusively by the civil authorities, by departments of marriages and births.

9. The School is separated from the Church; the teaching of religious confessions is not allowed in State, public and private schools where secular subjects are taught. The citizen may teach or be taught religion in a private capacity.

10. All Church and religious societies are subject to the general status existing for voluntary societies and unions and do not enjoy any privileges or subsidies from the State, nor from local autonomous and self-governing bodies.

11. Compulsory collections or assessments for the benefit of Church or religious societies, as well as measures of compulsion or punishment on the part of these societies over their members, are not permitted.

Note:—Voluntary contributions are permitted.

12. No Church and religious societies have the right to own property. They have no rights of juridic persons.

13. All property of existing Church and religious societies is declared the people's property. Buildings and objects specially designated for divine service are given for free use to corresponding religious societies on the basis of special ordinance of the local or central State authorities.

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# RELIGION AND RATIONALISM

*By* DR. PREM NATH

**T**HERE are so many definitions of religion used in different senses.

Scientifically religion is a system of belief as well as of worship and as such creeds and ceremonials and organisations grow around it, as aids and parasites. Anyone who has faith in religion will be asked to accept certain statements about the following :—1. The origin and development of the material universe. 2. The origin of life, including human life. 3. The relation of man to the universe. 4. The principles which ought to guide men in their thought, feelings and actions.

It is one of the most ancient claims of religion that to it has been given truth in its absolute purity, direct from Heaven. God has unveiled to man in advance all the information about everything which is essential for him to have. For the human understanding to pick or dig about these foundations is either superfluous or injurious. They are to be accepted in faith, not criticised by the so-called impious reason. It is a popular axiom of religion that in the things of God, we must accept whatever is established.

Almost every branch of Church claims more or less of this exclusive knowledge. Each has some oracle whose voice must be accepted as authoritative, and whose message as divine truth, needing not that examination and verification which other kinds of truth require before it is worthy of man's credence.

Here I request you to note that every religion has its own explanations and statements to make about those categories which I have mentioned above. These state-

ments may be even contradictory to each other. And in each case it will be found that the religious explanations are not only less tenable but less inspiring than those derived from the scientific method which these religions have combined to discredit. In discussing the evolution of the universe, of the world, of life, of human intellect, and of morality, this superiority of natural over supernatural ideas will become apparent. It shows how these so-called supernatural ideas sprang from imperfect knowledge. It proves them to have been inferences from ignorance.

Religion itself even in its most mystical forms is now known to be a product of natural evolution. Just as it is impossible for anyone to draw an imaginary animal which is not a composite of known animals, so it is impossible to devise a religion which is not built up from ideas gained through the senses. Religion may claim to draw its data from super-sensual sources but the claim is of no value until it is clearly shown that the data are such that the unaided imagination of man could never have conceived them. But every element of religion—the idea of God—immortality—heaven—hell—redemption—reincarnation—transmigration of soul, and so on—can be readily explained as an inference from the state of knowledge existing at the time it appeared.

The beliefs of religion are directed to that which it is not only difficult to know, which it is impossible to know, something which is inconceivable. All our knowledge is relative, that is, a knowledge of a thing through its relations and contrasts with

something else. How then can we know the so-called Absolute, the one supreme being existing by himself? How then, can we know that which is said to be beyond appearances and which is inaccessible to the senses? Man and all that belongs to him are finite. Even in his highest achievements his powers are narrowly limited. How then can he conceive the infinite? If, even in imagination he seeks to follow out the idea of the infinite he always falls short, no matter how immense his mental flight. Theologians may claim to know everything of soul, of creator, absolute and finite, but they are only deceiving themselves, mistaking familiarity with words for a real understanding of things. They talk of immaterial soul and God. But how can these things be known? In spite of this the majority of religions claim to solve these problems, the solution of which is beyond the natural power of reason, by the supernatural way of revelation; from that they derive the authority of the dogmas which, in the disguise of "Divine laws" control morality and the practical conduct of life. Ernest Haeckel has well said, "They say that it is true that God who reveals himself cannot be seen but he shows himself in thunder and lightning, storm and earthquake, fiery bush, a menacing cloud. Yet the revelation which he is supposed to bring to the credulous children of men is always anthropomorphic."

Further, if a supernatural revelation of truth ever did take place, it would bear its hall-mark so clearly that nobody could mistake it. There would not be a hundred different revelations with a thousand controversies. The very fact of more than one revelation is sufficient to raise doubts in the minds of reasonable people as to the validity of any one of them. The particular

revelation which the average man accepts depends upon the accident of his birth. If we happen to be born in a Hindu family, we adopt Brahmanism, if in a Mohammedan family Mohammedanism, if in a certain quarter of Bombay, Parseeism, and so on. And each revelation claims divine origin, the Mohammedan appeals to the Quran, the Parsee to the Zend avestha, the Brahman to his Vedas, and the Christian to his Bible. Each counts himself orthodox and regards the rest as heretical or infidel. Our notion of truth and falsehood therefore is determined according to the locality of our birth and the sphere of education.

A popular argument of the theologians about the existence of God is that there should be a creator or a manager of the universe. According to our daily experience, it seems to be the most reasonable guess, but still it is no more than a guess, and it is one by which nothing after all is proved. It is just like that Indian myth which tells us that the earth rests upon the horns of an ox, but it does not tell us on what the ox rests. God made the universe, but who made God? Theologians say that he is self-existent but it does not convey any meaning to us. The whole subject is beyond the powers of the human intellect in its present state. In the words of M. S. Laing, "The subjects which the theologians profess to have such an exact knowledge of are, for the most part, subjects respecting which nothing is or can be known."

When the arguments in favour of the divine existence are exhausted, the theologian puts the plea that the belief in God has always been the great anchor of the ship of morality in the tumultuous ocean of sin, vice and selfishness. People without the belief in God will become immoral. But this is a mistaken notion, fostered by

theological exponents for their own interests. Morality is not dependent upon theology in any of its forms for its existence, and probably existed for centuries before the idea of a personal God took possession of the mind of man. Morality is the experience of man, accumulated in the course of centuries of his life, as a social being. This thing or that thing, this action or that action have been found by experience to be "good" or "bad" for society as well as for the individual. From these there came into being general rules of conduct which developed into social customs. Social customs were included in religion. In the Law of Manu it is said that the custom handed down in regular succession since time immemorial is called the conduct of virtuous men. The conclusion derived is this; that religion tries to enforce such laws and customs universally and perpetually which have been evolved in a particular society and at a particular time. In this manner Ethics becomes a stereotyped code, and no generation can ever seek a better standard of conduct than its predecessor.

Morality cannot be stationary. We have the experience of our forefathers together with our own. So morality always changes with the addition of experience, discoveries, change of environment and with development of ideas.

Moreover, due to the accumulated experience of heredity, morality is now instinctive in our natures, which can be further developed through intellectual culture. For the more we become enlightened, we understand more and more clearly that the welfare of every individual is dependent on the welfare of the community, and the welfare of the community depends on the welfare of every individual. Our experience teaches us it is right, our

reason tells us it is useful that men should live morally, if they are to live as social beings. This conduct of life is therefore enjoined upon every man by his own instincts and also by popular opinion. Therefore it is a groundless fear that without the idea of God, without the guidance of religion, morality cannot exist. On the other hand a rigid and unchangeable conduct prescribed by religion is harmful to mankind. Winwood says; "The arbitrariness and rigidity of religion is indirectly adverse to morals because it is adverse to the freedom of intellect. One fact must be familiar to all those who have any experience of human nature—a sincerely religious man is often an exceedingly bad man. Piety and vice frequently live together in the same dwelling on the most amicable terms." Can there be a greater heartlessness than of those pious people who used to inflict the most horrible tortures of the Inquisition over their helpless victims? Can there be a greater hypocrite than an orthodox Hindu? Can there be any other word which can express more vehemently the hatred and prejudice of a religious man against those who are not of his sect than the words Kafir, Infidel or Mlechha? Under the influence of religion, through thousands of years, do we find that man is more honest and straight towards his fellowmen, that truth is preferred to falsehood, that men love one another, and act unselfishly in their lives? Or do we find that they are hypocrites, adulterators of foods, scampers of work and deceivers, worshippers of imaginary deities, preachers but not doers?

If we throw even a cursory glance over the history of mankind it will become quite evident that religion has always been a very potent political weapon employed by the ruling classes for the exploitation of

the masses. Even to-day we have a daily bitter experience of it in our individual as well as social and political life. History shows that imperialism has been established by those unscrupulous persons who deceived the people about their harmful designs through the disguise of religion. Religion has always fulfilled the designs of the imperialists.

Even to this day, by means of caste, slavery, the system of privileged classes, and monopolies, the people are forbidden to raise themselves in life, they are doomed to die as they are born. But that they might not be without hope, religion teaches them that they would be rewarded with honour and happiness in a future life. Every Achhut receives daily the good tidings that there is no caste after death; a Mohammedan serf is consoled with the text that the poor would inherit the kingdom of Heaven. The cardinal virtues prescribed for the lower classes are loyalty, piety and obedience.

Religion regards this world either as an illusion or as something evil or at best worthless. It urges spiritual detachment rather than effort for betterment as the way of salvation. "The Hindu religion in its higher forms," says Dr. Edwyn Bevan," taught men rather to emancipate themselves in spirit from a world which was incurably unsatisfactory than attempt to make the actual world different. In its lower forms it even incorporated in itself those very evils which destroyed the vitality of the race at its root. So far from disposing men to change them, it made it almost impossible to do so. It made the attempt appear dreadful impiety."

All the religions have used their authority to the detriment of women. They have limited their freedom and sometimes even made slaves of them. They could be sold just like animals. We learn in the Mahabharata that Yudhishtira lost his wife in gambling, as if a woman is an article of property which could be bought or sold

at will. Look at the condition of women in our own society: Child-widows, women jailed in purdah. All of these and other subjections are enjoined under the sanctity of religion. Cast a glance over the past and the present. Take all the factors into account. Then try to estimate how much physical and mental suffering has been due, in all the countries of the world, to the dead hand of dogma.

The doctrine of Divine right has been held to give supernatural authority to priesthood and kings. From this clericalism sprang, what has ever been, as history shows, one of the chief hindrances in the way of social progress and a parasite on society. The old orthodoxies have carried forward into our own times beliefs, habits of mind, customs, principles of education, which are now clearly harmful to our welfare. They do not let us have the benefit of the fruit of our own progressive experience.

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Greenwood says, " 'By their fruits ye shall know them' said the teacher." Wars, hatred, persecutions, tortures, bigotry, fanaticisms, ignorance, suppression of free thought, impediments to science, progress and civilization—such have been the fruits of religion. By excommunication and anathemas and terrorism and preaching of hell-fire, it blighted the happiness of men and enslaved their minds, while the hard and repulsive asceticism which became part of its system brought misery to the domestic hearth, introduced utterly false ideas with regard to the relations of the sexes, and has left a bitter legacy of evil to the modern generations.

Out of so many factors, religion is also an obstacle in our way to a better and saner outlook on life. Why does not Socialism, the most rational way to solve economic problems, appeal to the masses? Leaving many other factors, religion is also responsible for it. It teaches them to improve their condition in the hereafter, and not to care in the least as to how they lead their lives here in this real world.

After considering the above mentioned and so many other facts, persons of saner and broader minds have come to the conclusion that the religious outlook is not a healthy and desirable outlook on life. Throughout the world this antipathy has been felt against religion. The past few decades have been remarkable, not only for general progress but also for the rapid advancement of Rationalist principles. Thoughtful persons recognise the truth of Abercrombie's remarks that "it is the part of a well-regulated mind, not to know the truths but to know the grounds on which they are believed to be true." At a period not very remote, the usual custom was to rely with implicit faith upon the utterances of clerical parasites; now the

number of those who fairly examine for themselves is undoubtedly increasing. Free and earnest inquiry in every walk of life is more extensive at the present time than it has ever been.

One of the many mistakes of theologians is that they recognise no active progressive principles, but urge that the true faith was stereotyped thousands of years ago, and that all subsequent actions and duties must be shaped in its mould. Thus Rationalism has an important work to perform in seeking to destroy old notions which have proved detrimental to healthy mental growth, and in selecting new paths in the field of human thought and life.

Rationalism as defined by the R. A. I. is "that mental attitude which unreservedly accepts the supremacy of reason and aims at establishing a system of philosophy and ethics verifiable by experience and independent of all arbitrary assumptions or authority." George Jacob Holyoake has also well observed, "Rationalism advises what is useful to Society without asking whether it is religious or not. It makes morality the sole business of life, and declares that from the cradle to the grave man should be guided by reason and regulated by science. It looks on man, for all practical purposes, as a purely material being—other systems chiefly spiritualised him. It would have been well if they had spiritualised his miseries; but they have only refined into nothings his happiness, and left his wrongs and wretchedness solid, material and enduring. Rationalism does not regard man through the distorting spectacles of theology, which reveals only wounds, bruises, and putrefying sores, but discovers in humanity the germs of indefinite moral progress, which the genial influence of truth, love and justice will develop and nourish for ever."

## NOTES AND NEWS

On Sunday, November 2, Prof. R. D. Karve delivered a lecture in *Marathi* on Rationalism at the invitation of the Pathare Kshatriya Vakritwottejak Samaj in the premises of the Gamdevi Temple.

\* \* \* \*

We are thankful to those of our members who are trying to secure more members for the R. A. I. Had it not been for the increase in membership and the generous support of some of our members the publication of *Reason* would have been impossible, due to the all-round increase in expenses.

\* \* \* \*

We congratulate Col. O.B.R. Dickey on the manner in which he is helping the Rationalist cause by writing letters to the press and the B. B. C. We hope our other members will also do the same. Every rationalist must make it a point to protest against the religious claptrap that is served out to the public by the newspapers and the radio.

\* \* \* \*

We gratefully acknowledge the following :—

Tahir Mirza, Rs. 5; V. V. Sohoni, Rs. 5; Lt.-Col. K. G. Gharpurey, Rs. 5; Om Prakash Gupta, Rs. 5; Dr. Geo. Coelho, Rs. 5.  
*To Reason Fund*

J. R. Labelle, Rs. 15; J. N. Patuck, Rs. 50; Dr. Geo. Coelho, Rs. 20.

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Those who have taken books from the R. A. I. Library should please return them as early as possible.

Mr. Solomon regrets he has been unable to attend to correspondents promptly during the last month due to ill-health and consequent over-pressure of work.

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## REVIEWS

*Manavi Jeewan Ani Buddhiwad* (Marathi), by Narayan Sadashiv Bapat, 759-58 Hingne Road, Poona No. 4, Pp. 39, price as. five.

This small brochure explains the scientific attitude towards life and points out that all human progress is due to scientific discoveries which would never have been made if man had been content to rely on God or Fate. Religion, which depends on unreasoning faith, always prevents progress, while a rationalistic attitude necessarily makes man self-reliant and conscious of his abilities. The author discusses Gandhi's funny statement that reason cannot lead to the truth, because it can be used to prove anything, as lawyers prove opposing claims to be both valid in court! Gandhi is a barrister and his idea of logic is barrister's logic. He proposes faith as a substitute for logic and as a guide to truth. Only he forgets that faith may lead to contradictory truths just as barrister's logic does. The author illustrates his thesis in several other ways and the book is on the whole well argued though there may be a difference of opinion about certain statements in it.

R. D. Karve.

*Krishna and Christ*, by Henry J. Hayward, price 2 d.

*Christians and Freethinkers*, their everyday morals, by Henry J. Hayward, price 2 d.

*Christian Principles* ? by Henry J. Hayward, price 3 d.

These pamphlets have been issued by the Rationalist Association and Sunday Freedom League, 315 Victoria Arcade, Auckland, C. I., New Zealand.

The first one compares in parallel columns the similarities in the stories of Krishna and Christ. As an Indian, familiar with the story of Krishna from childhood, and with

a standard reference book written by a learned Sanscrit pundit in front of me, I am unable to find in Krishna's life many of the points mentioned in the list in this pamphlet. For instance, Krishna's mother was certainly not a virgin, having had seven other perfectly normal children, though Krishna himself was never in her womb, but suddenly appeared when she was due for delivery. Nor was Krishna born in a cave, but in the jail where his father and mother were confined. Nor was Krishna crucified. He was killed by an arrow striking the sole of his left foot, which was the only vulnerable part of his body. The author concludes that Christianity was derived from the cult of Krishna.

The second pamphlet proves by figures that the morals of freethinkers are in general far superior to those of Christians.

The third discusses whether there is any such thing as "Christian Principles," so glibly mentioned by Cabinet Ministers and others, especially in connection with the present war. It points out the contradictions of Christ and cites several eminent Christians whose expressed opinions do not show Christianity in a very favourable light.

The Rationalist Association of New Zealand is to be congratulated on its excellent propaganda work.

R. D. Karve.

A book which has been to many, the first introduction to Rationalist thought

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—Thomas Jefferson.

# REASON

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Asstt. Editor :

Abraham Solomon.

The writers of the articles in this journal are themselves responsible for the views expressed and do not implicate the Rationalist Association of India in any way.

We invite contributions of not more than 1,500 words on topics of interest to rationalists. They should be type-written. If not published they will not be returned unless stamps are enclosed. Matter for publication should reach the Editor on or before the 23rd.

All contributions, correspondence, press cuttings, journals in exchange, enquiries regarding advertisement rates, etc., should be addressed to Mr. Abraham Solomon, Asstt. Editor, "REASON," 59, Karmanl Building, Arthur Road, Bombay, 11.

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## SCIENCE—CURSE OR BLESSING?

Speaking at a public meeting at Bangalore Sir C. V. Raman, the well-known scientist, is reported to have "refuted the change that war at the present moment was due to science and scientific discoveries." We do not know what exactly he said, but the comments on his speech appearing under the title "A Scientist at Sea" in the 20th November issue of *Social Welfare* are as fine an example of confused thinking as one could wish to have. We read :

"The refutation was unnecessary. No thoughtful person has put it as crudely as that. It is Hitler who is responsible for this war and Herr Hitler is no more a scientist than he is a farmer or a musician."

Now, to say that Hitler is responsible for the war is as idiotic as saying that Science is. This tendency to blame one man for the war only helps to rouse the hatred of the people against one man and prevents them from giving proper attention to the various and complex forces which lead to war.

We read further :

"The psychological and biological factors which produce war would find less scope if science and scientific discoveries did not promise quick and easy victory to the aggressor. Herr Hitler would not have dared to bring this calamity on the world if he had not been confident that his scientists would help in securing a speedy and sure victory. It cannot be denied that science has mainly employed itself in promoting commerce industry and some of its choicest discoveries have been in encompassing destruction of life and property. In general

terms science claims to enlarge man's dominion on matter. But actually it enslaves the spirit to matter. The pursuit of material ends gains in over-emphasis and as deep thinkers have pointed out wars are the victories of the material over the spiritual element in Society. Science can *acquit itself of this charge only when it realizes the power of the spiritual element. Today science makes it a fashion to laugh at things spiritual. The scientist regards himself as the monopolist of Truth and so long as he claims that position he cannot escape the charge.*" (Italics ours).

The primitive savage gives human attributes to inanimate objects, the modern man does the same to words and abstractions. So we find "science promises," "employed itself," "acquit itself," "makes it a fashion to laugh." Funny creature that! And after saying all this about "science" and calling it "Charge against Science" we suddenly find in the last sentence the scientist taken by the ears and told that he "regards himself as the monopolist of Truth" and that "he cannot escape the charge." Which scientist and what charge?

Science, according to the Pocket Oxford Dictionary, means systematic and formulated knowledge. But these worthy champions of the "spiritual element" insist on talking as if science is some mysterious individual, some wicked uncle who has deliberately set the nation by the ears! The deep thinkers referred to, we believe, are none other than our friend, Sir Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan, whose views have been scrutinised by Editor Karve in the last issue of Reason and we need not go into them here.

As regards scientists helping Hitler, scientists all over the world help their respective Governments and this has nothing to do with the point at issue. Which scientist regards himself as the monopolist of truth? No sooner he does it he ceases to be a scientist, for, one of the first principles of the scientific attitude is constantly to test what has been so far regarded as true and be on the look-out for evidence contrary to it. If there is anyone who regards himself as the "monopolist of Truth," (with a capital T, of course) it is the man with the "spiritual element."

Now let Prof. H. Levy speak :

"The fact is, of course, that scientific study has taught us one lesson that has yet to be learned in the discussion of such matters—that blaming this or that individual, this or that set of ideas, this or that political or scientific group, is of no assistance whatsoever in resolving any problem. The growth of science and of morality and ethics has to be analysed objectively in the first instance, as one would examine any other physical charge. We have to examine the social forces that have called forth science, stimulated the growth of ethics, and led both to the present impasse. Once these are laid bare we can take stock of the forces at our disposal to direct the course of events in a way that befits intelligent and reasonable people. To begin by apportioning blame is to flounder about in a morass of ill-will and irritation. It is the parent of the suppression of freedom of speech and thought. It leads straight to the concentration camp and the inquisition."

"This is by no means the first time in the history of man that science has been looked at askance or attacked as a dangerous innovator. In each case it has been the special circumstances of the period that have decided the precise nature of the attack." (Science—Curse or Blessing?).

We wish the Social Welfare would also give some attention to mental welfare.

Abraham Solomon.

### BETWEEN OURSELVES

By the time these lines are in print members of the R.A.I. and friends will be congratulating Dr. C. L. D'Avoine on 4th December 1941, his 66th birthday, for his long and unstinted services to the cause of Rationalism in India.

Risking the editorial blue pencil I may mention that Editor Karve is not far behind. Friends who have seen and known him will be surprised to learn that he will be 60 on 14th January next.

To the discomfort of the champions of mysticism and superstition both these stalwart advocates of clear and independent thinking are in the best of physical and mental health and vigour.

Abraham Solomon.

# THE MARXIST'S OPIUM

By R. D. KARVE

**M**ARX has repudiated God and called religion the opium of the masses, but he was himself not entirely able to get rid of the religious mentality, instilled into him by the teachings of Hegel on which he was brought up. No doubt he said that he did not believe in Hegel's idea of God, viz., a Mind which was itself struggling towards the truth by means of conflicts with itself and ever rising to the realisation of a higher truth. But a belief in a god of some sort is certainly not the essence of the religious mentality, since we find religions like Buddhism which do not recognise a god. The essence of the religious mentality is mysticism, the belief that there is some mysterious power or powers guiding the destinies of mankind in a certain direction, whether you call that power God or Nature or anything else.

The scientist is in essence a rationalist, since even the few scientists who are religious are obliged to confess that they have to leave their religion outside when they enter their laboratories. And scientists have concluded long ago that Nature, even when personified, is not at all interested in the welfare of man or any other animal. Man may take advantage of the laws of nature if he can, but the laws remain severely impartial. Nature has no moral code, no concern with good or evil, no interest in capitalist or proletarian, no anxiety for the progress or regress of human society.

But Marx is not content with this attitude, if it can be so called, of Nature. He sees the injustice of the capitalist system which

crushes the proletariat, as others had seen it before him, but instead of coolly studying the conditions and devising means to change them, he dreams that the whole material universe tends to correct that injustice automatically. He asserts that capitalism bears in itself the seeds of its own destruction and necessarily leads to a revolution which will produce a dictatorship of the proletariat. The essence of his book "Das Kapital" is that the oppression of labour by capital will produce constant clashes and that the proletariat will ultimately become so desperate that it will rise in revolt and take possession of the means of production, that this is the inevitable course which events must take, and that any examples to the contrary are mere accidents. He says that he is led to this conclusion by his study of history, but there is nothing in history to show that this must necessarily happen, or even that it has ever happened before. His prediction is purely imaginary.

He calls his method scientific, but he knew in his heart that science would not support him. Science is based on facts and logical conclusions drawn from them. So he becomes a super-scientist and a super-logician. For this he has re-instated the Dialectic Method, the method of argument found in Plato's Dialogues, which has long ago been superseded by modern logic. But modern logic will not serve his purpose, so modern logic is repudiated. Logic insists that a statement cannot be true and false at the same time. Marx does not recognise this law of contradiction. In fact, he maintains that everything

contains its own contradiction, its opposite; and that from a clash of these opposites arises a conclusion which is higher than both. One may wonder how a thing can itself be its opposite, but Marxists have a way of cheating themselves into this belief. They will say that since a cause from one point of view may itself be an effect from another point of view, it is obvious that everything contains its own opposite. Since the idea of death is obviously connected with life, they are really the same, and so on. So capital and labour being opposites, a clash between them must automatically lead to a system higher than capitalism, since the Universe tends that way according to Marx. But for this last assumption, he has never given any kind of proof, though it is the essence of Marxism.

It is often contended that the Russian revolution is an illustration of Marx's thesis. But a little consideration will show that it is nothing of the kind. Marx predicted a proletarian revolution in countries which were highly industrialised and in which, as a consequence, the proletariat had become desperate. England, where Marx spent a large portion of his life, was a highly industrialised country and was, according to Marx, ripe for a proletarian revolution. Russia certainly was not, as it was rather backward industrially, and according to Marx's theory of automatic progress towards revolution, as he has himself laid down, "No social formation ever disappears before all the productive forces are developed for which it has room." Considering this dictum, the Russian revolution was a direct contradiction of Marx's thesis.

Lenin, the practical statesman who engineered the Bolshevik revolution, pretended to be a Marxist, but when it came to action, he not only left Marxism

to take care of itself; but actually wrote what must look like heresy to real Marxists. He saw that workers by themselves are never revolutionary, that they tend rather to compromise with capitalists by means of Trade Unions and so improve their own position, so that they never become desperate enough to rise in revolt, because capitalists are wise enough to see that it is better to yield to a certain extent to their demands. Thus the position of workers has considerably improved in England owing to such compromises and there is not the slightest chance of a proletarian revolution there. Lenin saw therefore that the only way to engineer a revolution was to organize a strong party of professional revolutionists, as he called them, who were willing to take any risks to effect their purpose and who may not be proletarians at all. He bought over the peasants by promising them grants of lands taken from the aristocrats and undertook to educate the proletariat to see that a revolution would also benefit them, and that is how the revolution came about. And the result was certainly not a dictatorship of the proletariat as predicted by Marx, but a dictatorship of the Communist Party, which did not consist of proletarians, but of people who believed in the revolution. No doubt an appearance of democracy was given to the whole thing, just as Hitler pretended that he was the elected dictator of Germany, but the fact remains that the elections were engineered so as to give a majority to the Party, and later, when Stalin succeeded to the leadership, it became the dictatorship of one man, in fact though not in theory. Marx's utopian formula, "From each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs," was nowhere. No doubt everybody gets food and shelter if he does not contradict the Party, but woe to him if

he does! Since the State is the only employer, a man who is dismissed from a job has no chance of getting any other and has to starve to death unless he chooses a quicker way. Incomes differ by twenty times or more, so equality has disappeared. Liberty lies in the recognition of the necessity of obeying the Party unless one is prepared to starve! It is certainly not so bad as Nazism or Fascism, but it is tyranny all the same.

It must be recognized, however, that Marx, like Freud, has rendered one invaluable service to mankind. Marx delved beneath the surface of things and unearthed the economic motive and its vast repercussions which were undreamed of before his time, though he was wrong in predicting that economical developments automatically led to proletarian revolutions, as Freud, after him, unearthed the sex motive and its repercussions where they were formerly invisible. Freud also exaggerated, but did not attribute mystical powers to the material universe.

It is this mystical interpretation of nature that warns rationalists against Marx. Rationalists are, in general, in sympathy with the aspirations of the proletariat and several of them have suggested ways and means. They cannot however believe that a dictatorship of the proletariat is essentially better than any other dictatorship. Reasonable people, who do not believe that nature has any particular interest in promoting the welfare of workers in particular, or mankind in general, will have to study defects in the present system and devise means to remedy them. They need not believe in the necessity of violence to effect their purpose and still may be quite fair in considering the best interests of all concerned. They cannot therefore swallow communist propaganda as to the

inevitability of a revolution or the advisability of helping it on. One wonders in fact why communists should be so anxious about their revolution if their Prophet Marx has laid it down that the proletarian revolution is going to be automatic, not only without help from them, but in spite of all opposition! Marx himself was so sure about this that he has hardly given any practical instructions as to how the revolution is to be engineered, or what is to be done after the workers have succeeded in taking possession of the means of production. Difficulties are to resolve themselves automatically, so why should he care to say anything about them? Marx calls this science, but no scientist will agree with him.

I disagree with every word of what you say, but I shall defend to the death your right to say it.

—Voltaire.

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# NATURE OF MASS ASTROLOGY.

By **TOM HARRISON.**

*Reproduced from "THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION".*

**T**O-DAY more people follow their fate (or Hitler's) in the stars, as interpreted by astrologers, than follow the day-to-day news of God or Satan, as outlined by his archbishops and vicars. Since 1930, when Naylor started in the "Sunday Express" astrology has become an extensive British interest. In several newspapers it is now roughly as influential as the editorial column, so far as women (the majority of the population) are concerned. Its greatest influence comes through the Sunday press—all mass Sunday papers run it, but Archidamus of the "Daily Mail" and Ann Maritza of the "Mirror" are also very important. Most women's journals, many monthly periodicals, plug astrology. There are thousands of private astrologers doing extensive business by correspondence; of the several versions of Old Moore's Almanack one alone sells 3,000,000 copies annually. Specialised astrological booklets and magazines have sales running into hundreds of thousands.

Sunday astrologers, Naylor of the "Express" and Lyndoe of the "People", have far and away the biggest followings in the country. They rank at the sub-Churchill level of leadership along with Gable, Hickey, Hylton, Hilton, Hulton, Formby, Flanagan, Allen, and Ernest Brown. Their predictions are repeatedly mentioned in conversation and used in argument among people of all classes and in all parts of the country. A sample of Naylor's technique from the "Sunday Express" on sale a few hours after Germany invades Russia:

Don't count upon operations there being held up because of differences between Stalin and Hitler. I still hold to my forecast that they won't quarrel yet. . . .

Turkey has just "signed on the dotted line" with Germany. Now, on April 27th, I told you: "Germany and Soviet Russia between them will 'fix' Turkey by a combination of back-stage diplomacy, terrorist tactics and enveloping movements."

Naylor dealt with this slip the following week:

That Soviet Russia and the U. S. would somehow link up has often been predicted here. It has come to pass in this unexpected way, for both face the same aggressor. The link-up is sure to involve China.

\* \* \* \* \*

Similarly, the other most influential astrologer, Lyndoe, wrote in the "People" on this Soviet Sunday:

Shuffle and squirm as they will, Stalin and his junta cannot escape. Russia is in for another blood-bath and the counter-revolution will not fail this time.

The following week he started his column:

Why the surprise about Russia? Both the German attack and the link-up with Britain were announced here in 1939.

Originally astrology was one of the two general means at the disposal of the priests for ascertaining the will and intention of the gods. In its early, pre-Christian stages it was limited to public welfare and the interest of the community. In the twentieth century the territory of astrology has been vastly extended, through its

popular success and through ever-increasing pressure of market competition between the different astrologers, so that it now covers practically everything that could conceivably be predicted, advised or supposed about the future 'and' the past. For instance, the most serious astrological journal, ("Astrology") after detailed astro-psychiatric research, has maintained that neurotic depression is due to birth at the moment when Saturn is elevated in mid-heaven, with the moon 120 degrees distant from Saturn beneath the descendant in the fifth or sixth House.

\* \* \* \* \*

So much for the background of contemporary astrology. Against this background Mass-Observation has conducted over the past three months a detailed study of the extent and nature of astrological belief among ordinary people. The following is a necessarily brief summary of the results :

(1) Nearly two-thirds of the adult population glance at or read some astrological feature more or less regularly (July). About four out of ten have some degree of belief or interest in astrology, often slight. This figure is made up mainly of women.

(2) Interest and belief have tended steadily to increase since the war.

(3) The quality of belief is complex, often superficial and generally confused. Press astrology is itself so individualist, wide and changeable, as to encourage this. The mixture of commonsense personal advice with international interpretation of developing events, gives mass astrology a multiple appeal, and it is possible to reject one part and accept another.

(4) Total devotees of astrology are comparatively rare, but there are quite a number of them, mostly among working-class women, like this Lyndoe fan :

I think astrology is the most reliable way of telling the future. Astrologers are so often right. I read him and study

him regularly, and I find it's a great help; things don't seem to go wrong anywhere so much as before I started reading him. I really have great faith in him. I certainly think it's the only way of getting near the truth—it's thousands of years old and people have trusted so I don't see why I shouldn't now. I plan by him. If he said I'd get run over on a certain day if I went out, I would never leave the house even to go into the garden.

(5) There is a considerable amount of shame about admitting you believe at all in astrology. Very frequent are comments like this one from a person asked if she believed at all :

Good heavens, no. Of course I often read the forecasts and I always look at my birthday, sometimes they aren't bad. I think Naylor is quite good. They were all very bad when the war broke out, because they all said there wouldn't be one, I think I really realised for the first time how bad they were, don't you think so ?.....Of course, if I read that I might have a terrible accident it would make me nervous, but I don't really believe in them.

\* \* \* \* \*

(6) The depth of belief ranges all the way from occasional humorous interest to fanaticism. But after studying hundreds of comments and conversations it is impossible to doubt that astrology is now a very considerable influence in determining the minor decisions of many private lives, and an appreciable contributory factor in influencing attitude to wider international events.

(7) The reasons for belief or interest are complex. Briefly, astrology offers to the ordinary person :

(i) Commonsense advice about one-self.

(ii) Conservative guidance, largely telling people to look after their own interests carefully.

(iii) A reflection of oneself (and indirectly flattery therefrom).

(iv) The excitement of "coincidence" and "luck," when predictions come right.

(v) Constant emphasis on the bright side (both personally and national). Astrologers almost unanimously predicted NO WAR and have since often predicted that the war will be over well before August, 1941.

(vi) Simple explanations of the reasons for what is happening in this complex, sudden world.

(vii) Some degree of forewarning of what may be expected to happen next.

(viii) A gambler's chance (at least) in prediction possibilities; and associated with this, a sort of general, racing tipster, interest in affairs.

(ix) A crude code for day-to-day behaviour, and a crude focus on the better aspects of the future.

(x) An element of "science" and scientific validity plus an element of mystery and history and myth.

(xi) "Fun" and readable writing (Lyndoe is a superb journalist).

(8) Above all the obligations of astrology are negative and negligible. You do not need to have any social contact, cash-transfer unselfishness, moral code, co-operation or consistency to follow its advice—like this for people born between July 24th and August 23rd (birthday advice is a feature of practically all astrological items):

Open air and exercises are necessary to you this week, and at least one romantic episode will come your way out of doors. A new boy-friend is going to expect a lot from you, in fact he will probably annoy you by treating you more like a boy than a girl. However, this will be a compliment from him. Gold and violet for luck.

(9) Similarly, the effort of interest and belief is minimal. Any one, however, apathetic or ignorant, can be in some degree interested, without becoming engrossed, and without taking any permanent, definite or outward stand about anything. And there is no service, even on Sunday.

(10) The degree of disillusion in astrology's international predictions does not correspond to the frequent major errors made. This is largely because people want to believe something good, and get pleasure from expecting something good, even if it doesn't happen.

(11) Further, people want to believe in something which at least appears to interpret events and trends in the complex and dangerous civilisation in which uneducated people find themselves confused, worried, many of their certainties weakened. Mass astrology reflects the underlying insecurity and worry of the past 1930 years. It offers immediate temporary (but continually renewed and rearranged) antidotes.

What is the effect of all this? Astrology is essentially conservative (in the strict sense of the word), sedative, private, unsocial. The events of 1941 are explained by the birth moments of the principal characters—Churchill, Hitler, Stalin, Roosevelt. The principal operative factor in world history is the moment of birth of each individual in it; and the individuals who come to the top can only do so if born at right moments—the fortunate aristocracy of time. There are elaborations around this theme, but it is fundamental in astrology, and astrological theory is based firmly upon it.

Such theory, whether correct or not, is opposed to the trend of scientific thought in the past century; of liberal and socialist thought, too. Probably few astrologers realise this, but it comes out very frequently

\* \* \* \* \*

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# SADISM IN CHRISTIANITY

By S. HALDAR

**S**ADISM is an element in human character which derives pleasure from being cruel to others. We read in the Bible: "It is a burnt offering, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord." Referring to the eternal torments of unbelievers and non-believers in hell, St. Thomas Aquinas said in the 13th century: "In order that nothing may be wanting to the felicity of the blessed spirits in heaven a perfect view is granted them of the tortures of the damned." Dr. David Forsyth stated in a lecture at the Royal Society of Medicine: "The sadism of Christianity was evident in its cruel treatment in the past of the unorthodox, including the slaughter of heretics."\*

The following extract is from a letter of the German Catholic Bishop of Lahore published in the *Christian World* and reproduced in *India* (the official organ of the Indian National Congress published in London) of December 26, 1902: "How marvellous are the Lord's ways? One might almost say that the Divine intention has been to make the parents disappear in order that their children might be led to the Mission and there find the Christian salvation. The last two periods of famine have brought to the Catholic Mission thousands of orphans who are all to-day pious Catholics."

Here is another from the Church of England. The Rev. Dr. Inge while discussing in the columns of one of Lord Beaverbrooke's organs the question of the pressure of population on subsistence,

referred to an alleged improvement which was said to have taken place in the standard of living in a certain part of India by reason of the fact that half the population of that area had been drowned by flood, and, observed: "I think the rice-eating people should be treated as a group by themselves. Chronic over-population, periodically relieved by flood, famine and pestilence, is the normal condition of rice-eaters everywhere."

The Catholic Bishop and the Anglican Dean have both derived their sadistic inspiration from the word of God. We find from Exod. xiv that God hardened Pharaoh's heart, and troubled the Egyptian army which he overthrew in the midst of the sea. The Egyptian war chariots were drowned, along with the horsemen, and all the hosts of Pharaoh, not a soul having escaped. God expressed his delight by saying: "I have gotten me honour upon Pharaoh, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen." We have it in Psalms lviii: "The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance: he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked." In Psalms lix: "O Lord God of hosts, the God of Israel, awake to visit all the heathen; be not merciful to any wicked transgressors. And In Psalms cxlix: "Let the saints be joyful in glory.....let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand; to execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people." Psalm cxxxvii expresses joy at the dashing of little Babylonian children against the stones. Anselm, the English Saint of the eleventh century, has stated in *Cur Deus Homo* that

\* Reported in The Times of November 14, 1932.

the punishment of sinners "gives honour to God."

When inoculation for small-pox was being introduced into England, two hundred years ago, it was met with violent opposition. A pamphlet was published condemning it as unlawful and entirely contrary to Scripture. The clergy were highly indignant at what they considered "an impious attempt to take the issues of life and death out of the hands of Providence." The introduction of inoculation was condemned by the theologians of the Sorbonne, and by a large number of the English clergy, some of whom, on Biblical authority, thought it a diabolical practice, and an "encroachment on the prerogative of Jehovah, whose right is to wound and smite. Dr. Jenner who introduced vaccination in 1796 went through a terrible time before the ignorance and prejudices of Christian England could be overcome. One of Jenner's opponents wrote: "The omnipotent God of nature.....has 'permitted Evil, Bonaparte and Vaccination to exist, to prosper, and even to triumph for a short space of time, perhaps as the scourge and punishment of mankind for their sins.'" (*Ibid*). Writing of the European diseases introduced into North America by the early colonists, Professor William Christie Macleod, in "The American Indian Frontier," says: "An attitude peculiar to the English colonists of North America, but taken most seriously by the Puritans, was that God sent such diseases in advance of Christian colonization in order to wipe out the pagan population and thereby make room for his own people." He further states in the same place: "A variant opinion held by Sir Ferdinando Gorges of Maine, and by the Quaker Governor of California, maintained that God did all this spreading of disease to relieve the

English of the necessity of killing off Indians by fire and sword in order to colonize the country. "And indeed," says the Quaker Governor, "Providence seemed wholly to design this bloody work for the Spanish nation, and not the English, who in their nature are not so cruel as the other." A very good Christian, Professor B. T. Wilden Hart, wrote to the *Church Times* in September 1923 to say that the anxiety of those who had friends in Japan would be lessened by the consideration that "by the merciful dispensation of Providence this terrible visitation of earthquake and fire has taken place at a season of the year when most of the white people would have left such towns as Tokyo and Yokohama."

When nearly a hundred years ago, the Scotsman, James Y. Simpson, introduced the use of anaesthetics for women in child-birth, thereby averting untold agony, he was treated as a blasphemer. We are told by Sir John Squire: "Now there arose a hue and cry, first from eminent divines, and they, of course, not themselves able to have babies, found it hard to understand the annoyance that mothers suffer. What about the Bible dicta? What about the primeval curse? What about 'In sorrow shalt thou bring forth thy children'? But Simpson was not a Scot for nothing. Though professionally a doctor, he was—like most Scots—a stout theological arguer. He shouted that the word 'sorrow' was a bungling translation of the original Hebrew. He confounded the divines by expostulating that, if to abolish child-birth's pain was wicked, then the whole art and science of medicine must be abandoned! For in the primeval curse of Adam, was not man doomed to die? Then he tossed a final theological bomb among the

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# EDUCATIONAL IDEALS

*By* **CRITIQUE**

(Continued from page 172.)

International peace is accepted by all progressive peoples as one of the ideals of education. The organisation of peace would be possible only if those who work for it understand the causes of war. Speaking at the opening ceremony of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan at Andheri, Bombay, on October 8th, Sir S. Radhakrishnan is reported to have said that the cause of the present war was not to be sought in Hitler's personal psychology or the failure of the Disarmament Conference, or rivalry in the over-crowded field of colonial expansion, or the desire for domination, but that the real cause lay in the defeat of the human by the material.

The failure of the Disarmament Conference was itself the result of the conflict of social forces. The representatives assembled at Geneva spent their time in interminable discussions over technicalities, while the majority of them would not agree to the freedom of all peoples. Two groups of imperialist nations faced each other at the Conference, each wanting a monopoly of the right to exploit the majority of mankind, and their conflict could only be solved on the field of battle. Hence the dismal failure of the Conference.

Similarly it would be vain to seek the prime cause of war in Hitler's personal psychology, because even his death will not deter the Nazi war machine from moving along the present path of aggrandisement. Hitler is the chief executive of a social group which controls the economic and ideological activities of Germany and which hopes to reduce all the countries under

German control into agricultural lands subject to one supreme industrial centre in Germany. This is the new economic order of Hitler, and its essence is an expanding German imperialism. Hitler's psychology is that of this social force. Therefore the real cause would be imperialism, and its attendant psychology. The desire for domination, as a psychological factor, need not express itself in the disastrous form of imperialism or war, or racial arrogance, unless there are persistent economic forces seeking to harness this factor along such channels. I am therefore inclined to think that colonial rivalry, and the desperate necessity of German imperialism to expand or disintegrate are the real causes of this war. Going one step backward, I would argue that it is the present economic structure, whose normal features are appalling poverty amidst plenty, colossal unemployment amidst idle plants and machinery, and production for profit, in disregard of social welfare, which is responsible for breeding imperialism and war. The immediate task would therefore be the destruction of all forms of imperialism and establishment of economic and political democracy, and a federation of free peoples of the world. The task of education is not merely to inculcate a love of peace in the abstract, but to make the young understand the social forces that express themselves in war, and to train them to play their due part in the struggle for the achievement of that social order which would make international wars unnecessary.

What then is the meaning of the phrase "defeat of the human by the material"?

Does it mean that imperialism is itself a product of the depravity of a few people and that the iniquities of contemporary society are due to the greed and ruthlessness of some individuals who have lost their humanity? If this is so, all that is wanted is preaching to change the hearts of a few individuals who hold the strings of economic and political power, in order to achieve social justice. But if the present chaotic misery is the result of faulty economic institutions there should be an abolition of such institutions and classes and a radical change in the social structure.

It may be said that the "human" has been defeated by the material in the sense that man has become attached to the material amenities of life. This is the view of a great many men, including Gandhiji, and to them the way forward lies along a path of renunciation. They view the immense development of man's power over nature as a chain binding man to an insane pursuit of newer and newer material amenities, and this they consider as an unmitigated calamity.

A rationalist cannot accept as an ideal a victory of the human over the material either in the sense of renunciation or in the sense of a patient waiting till doomsday for the possessors of wealth and power to surrender them to the community as a whole. What has happened is that man in his pursuit of the necessities of life, has harnessed the forces of nature, widened his knowledge, organised himself in economic and political groups, developed ideas, laws and ethics corresponding to the structure of his society and the degree of integration of mankind. The present war is an expression of the present epoch of the historical process and what we are witnessing is the last desperate attempt of imperialism, as an inevitable product of history, trying to

maintain itself as against the rival social forces which are slowly but surely rising to power. The function of education is not to train to obtain a victory of the human over the material in the two senses above referred to, but to give him a scientific outlook on social and natural evolution, and to equip him with a code of ethics that would enable him to discern the directions of the social progress and do everything to facilitate that process.

(Continued from page 190)

reverends : Wasn't it extraordinary, under the Christian dispensation, that 'the God of Mercy' should wish for, and delight in the sacrifice of women's screams of pain?''\*

It is stated that the use of chloroform in *accouchement* cases in the nineteenth century was violently opposed by the clergy. An English priest wrote : "Chloroform is a decoy of Satan apparently offering itself to bless woman but in the end will harden society and rob God of the deep, earnest cries which arise in time of trouble for help. *Schadenfreude*, or malicious pleasure in the misfortune of others arises from anti-moral springs of action which are discreditable to religion. "Let there be no pity," cried Luther, inciting the German princes to "stab smite, and destroy" the insurgent peasants; "it is the time of wrath, not of mercy. So wondrous are the times that princes can better merit heaven by bloodshed than by prayers."

\* The Illustrated London News of May 21, 1938.

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## NOTES AND NEWS

Fascism is an ideology diametrically opposed to Rationalism. Whatever its advocates may profess in practice it stands for intellectual slavery, social injustice, and cultural reaction. Rationalists stand for intellectual liberty, social justice, and cultural progress and as such they must carry on an uncompromising and determined onslaught on Fascism on all fronts.

The R. A. I. was represented at the All India Students' Anti-Fascist Conference held at Delhi on the 15th and 16th of last month, by Dr. Prem Nath, our representative for Northern India. Much interest was shown in the activities of the R. A. I. and many who were not aware of it came to know of its existence.

Dr. Prem Nath is doing some good work in his area. It may take some time before a large enough group is formed. The success of any group or body always depends on the active and co-ordinated efforts of five or six determined workers. We hope rationalists in that part of India who can do something will not lose time and join hands with Dr. Prem Nath in carrying on the good work. They can depend on all possible help from headquarters.

Now that a group is being formed in Northern India and as we expect to have groups in other parts of India as well, we might give a few hints to those who intend to do active work. There is a certain type of persons who are found in almost all organisations everywhere. They are adept in the art of killing an organisation. If one does not want to be hampered by such persons one has simply to ignore them and just go ahead with what one intends to do. These people are usually incapable of doing

anything themselves except giving a lot of advice as to what should be done, how it should be done, etc., etc.—by others. We may have to say more on this matter later on but for the present what follows will suffice.

\* \* \* \*

The following hints on how to kill an organisation which were read at a meeting of the American National Organization of Trade Association Secretaries will be of interest :

1. Don't come to the meetings.
2. If you do come, come late.
3. If the weather doesn't suit you, don't think of coming.
4. If you attend a meeting, find fault with the work of the officers and other members.
5. Never accept office, as it is easier to criticise than to do things.
6. Nevertheless, get sore if you are not appointed on a Committee ; but if you are, do not attend the Committee meetings.
7. If asked by the chairman to give your opinion regarding some important matter tell him you have nothing to say. After the meeting, tell everyone how things ought to be done.
8. Do nothing more than is absolutely necessary ; but when other members roll up their sleeves and willingly, unselfishly, use their ability to help matters along, howl that the association is run by a clique.
9. Hold back your dues as long as possible, or don't pay at all.
10. Don't bother about new members. Let the Secretary do it.
11. When a banquet is given, tell everybody money is being wasted on blow-outs which make a big noise and accomplish nothing.
12. When no banquets are given, say the association is dead, and needs a can tied to it.
13. Don't ask for a banquet ticket until all are sold, then swear you have been cheated out of yours. If you do get a ticket, don't pay for it.
14. Keep your eyes open for something wrong, and when you find it, resign.
15. When you attend a meeting, vote to do something, and then go home and do the opposite.
16. At the meeting, agree to everything said ; and outside, disagree with it.
17. When asked for information, don't give it.
18. Get all the association gives you, but don't give it anything.
19. Talk of co-operation from the other member with you, but never co-operate with him.
20. When everything else fails, blame the Secretary.

Thorough as the Americans are we could bet that some people of the type

we mentioned above, nearer home, can teach even the Americans a thing or two in this matter.

\* \* \* \* \*

We thank Mr. Jal M. Cooper, a very keen member of the Association and formerly one of its secretaries, for offering the R. A. I. the use of the excellent hall of the Philatelic Society at Standard Building, 2nd floor, Hornby Road, Fort, Bombay, just above "The Great Western Stores." This is a very central place and will meet one of the most important needs of the R. A. I., viz., a place for members to meet.

\* \* \* \* \*

From this month there will be one public lecture every month at the above hall; usually on the third Wednesday of each month at 6-30 p.m. In addition to this there will also be other functions arranged, such as informal discussions, talks, social functions, etc. It is now up to our local members to make these functions a success, and introduce new members. Announcements will appear in local papers.

\* \* \* \* \*

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## REVIEW

**Continence and Its Creative Power,**  
by Swami Jagadiswarananda, Sri Rama-  
krishna Math, Karachi, pp. 44. Price  
four annas.

The author takes great pride in the supposed fact that the value of continence was first discovered by some Vedic Rishis and that then this wonderful discovery was passed on to the rest of the world. There is a class of religious fanatics in India who imagine that the ancient Rishis were descended from God himself and had extraordinary powers of mind and body. All mankind is derived from them, but as generations passed, these powers gradually disappeared, so that man has degenerated to his present level. This is the exact opposite of the modern theory of evolution, but this is what orthodox people believe, and the author evidently belongs to that class though he tries to impress modern readers by quoting some more or less modern authorities. The advocates of continence always create a confusion between moderation and absolute abstinence. No sensible man advocates excess of any kind and it is no use pointing to the evils of excess as an argument in favour of absolute continence. It may also be remembered that most of these ancient Rishis were themselves married and had children and could not therefore advocate absolute continence. It is also necessary to point out that the evidence of history amply proves that people who have given evidence of extraordinary mental or physical power have not been total abstainers from sex, but sometimes the contrary. One can hardly consider Napoleon as addicted to chastity, and our own Mahratta hero Shivaji had eight wives.

As for the authorities quoted by the author, medical authorities can be quoted on either side, but it must be noted that it is only the more orthodox who make the absurd claim that absolute continence does no harm. A doctor can at most claim that he has not personally seen any instances of harm done by continence, but even if there is a single sexologist who maintains that he has seen instances of this kind, that claim cannot stand. One of the authorities quoted says (p. 12), "Nature has provided in the most simple and infallible way for the excess of nutrition which is represented by the seminal fluid and the menstrual flux." To put the two into the same category and to speak of the seminal fluid as "excess of nutrition" is to proclaim oneself an ignoramus. The value of continence is based on the old exploded theory that the seminal fluid, if prevented from passing out of the body, serves as a valuable source of nutrition and energy. This has been shown to be impossible, so that the supposed benefits of continence are even theoretically not there. Practically speaking, everybody knows how absurd it is to claim, as the author does, that widows who are compelled to remain abstinent can keep up their youthful appearance to a very old age. It is equally absurd to quote Gandhi as an authority on continence. Gandhi says, "If even after twenty years of sensual enjoyment, I have been able to reach this stage, how much better should I have been if I had kept myself pure during those twenty years as well?" One can equally well assert that he would have been much better if he had lived a normal life instead of taking to abstinence. Gandhi's attitude can be judged from the fact that he considers sex impure! What is the value of the opinions of such people? If sex is impure

why is hunger not impure? What sense is there in pretending that there is some merit in keeping certain organs and functions of the body out of use?

The fact is that the merit of sexual continence is on a par with the merit of fasting. Both are methods of torturing the body, and the real idea behind this torture is that it secures you a place in heaven. The pretended advantages to health are merely an eye-wash for people who will not listen to religious arguments based on heaven and hell.

The author proclaims himself the disciple of Swami Shivananda, who has himself written equally absurd books in Marathi. What these people call knowledge is sheer ignorance of modern scientific knowledge; and their attempts to bolster up their views with quotations from so-called modern authorities really show up their ignorance. If any doctor is to be given any importance in this matter, the first essential qualification is that he must not be religious, because a religious doctor puts his religion before his science, apart from the fact that medicine has not yet reached the status of a science. Dr. Wm. J. Robinson, who died recently, was a well-known sexologist and an acknowledged authority on sex problems. He has stated emphatically the dangers of continence, and I can only warn readers that Swamis can hardly be considered worth listening to when scientific matters are in question. They have inevitably a religious bias and that is the ruin of any scientific knowledge they may perhaps possess. People who want knowledge on scientific subjects should confine themselves to non-religious scientific writers.

R. D. Karve.

### A CORRECTION.

The title of the first book reviewed on page 162 of the October Issue of **Reason** should be **European Revolution** and not "European Evolution."

(Continued from page 188)

in their work. For instance, we can trace the extreme right-wing of astrology into Rosicrucianism, British Israelites, Social Credit, Yogi and Parliament Christian. Lyndoe characteristically starts his latest best-seller (*Your Next Ten Years*) with a long quotation from Arthur Bryant, and his first and principal prediction is "the sudden emergence of a World Leader.....His coming in the early part of the year (1941) is as plainly indicated as was the original star of Bethlehem's humble focus."

\* \* \* \* \*

The people who believe in astrology are ordinary human beings, average civilised citizens. They are reacting in a normal way to this time, when spiritual and moral satisfactions and goals are inadequate to the human need. The remarkably rapid development of astrology on to its present mass basis is a symptom of the mental condition of people (specially housewives) in Britain, a condition of material progress, immaterial regress.

Our detailed investigations show (statistically) that astrology asserts a temporary steadying influence. The immediate effect is favourable to morale. Women who believe in astrology tend to be appreciably more cheerful, confident and calm than those who do not (June-July).

But the long-term effect is to stress fantasy confidences rather than real ones, and to emphasise the personal interest rather than the common interest. Here we come into the area of hypothesis and debate. It is a debate which should, I suggest, be actively conducted in the minds and companies of all those concerned with the post-war world. At present the filling of certain psychological needs is being left to the initiative of enterprising journalists and enthusiastic mystics, who are not necessarily concerned with the long-term interests or the spiritual health of the community at large.